

## MAHIRAVANA

When his rakshasa army was destroyed in the battle against Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, Ravana, the Lord of Lanka, called for his son Mahiravana, a powerful magician. Would he succeed in killing the noble Rama and Lakshmana? Not while Hanuman was around, for this faithful friend had a trick or two of his own. The Bengali "Krittivasa Ramayana" written by poet Krittivasa in the 15th century describes how Hanuman manages to get around the wily sorcerer's schemes.

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# MAHIRAVANA

A MAGICIAN OUTWITTED

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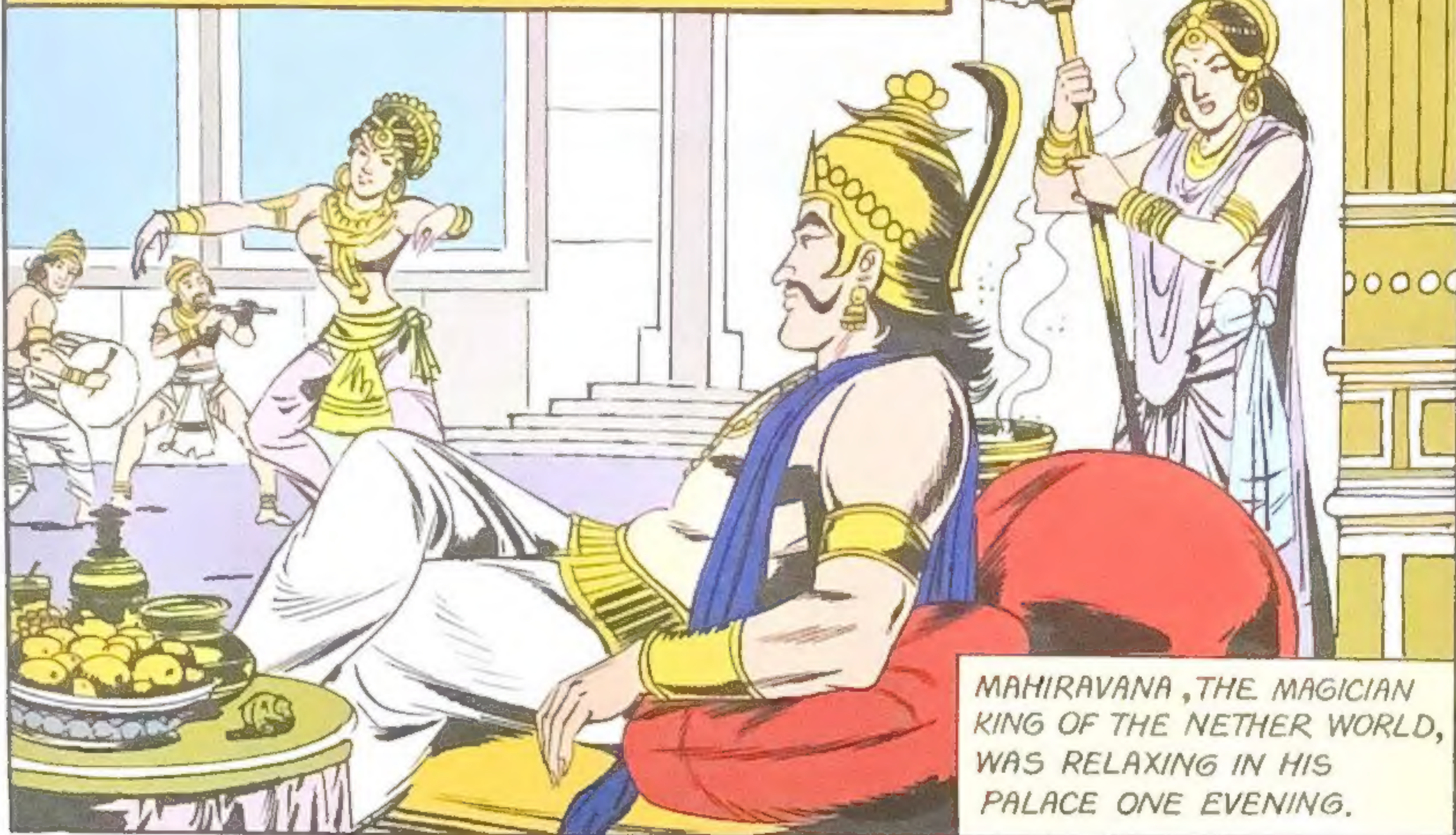


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# MAHIRAVANA



MAHIRAVANA, THE MAGICIAN KING OF THE NETHER WORLD, WAS RELAXING IN HIS PALACE ONE EVENING.

SUDDENLY, THROUGH HIS SUPERNATURAL POWERS, HE PERCEIVED THAT SOMEONE WAS IN DANGER AND NEEDED HIS HELP.

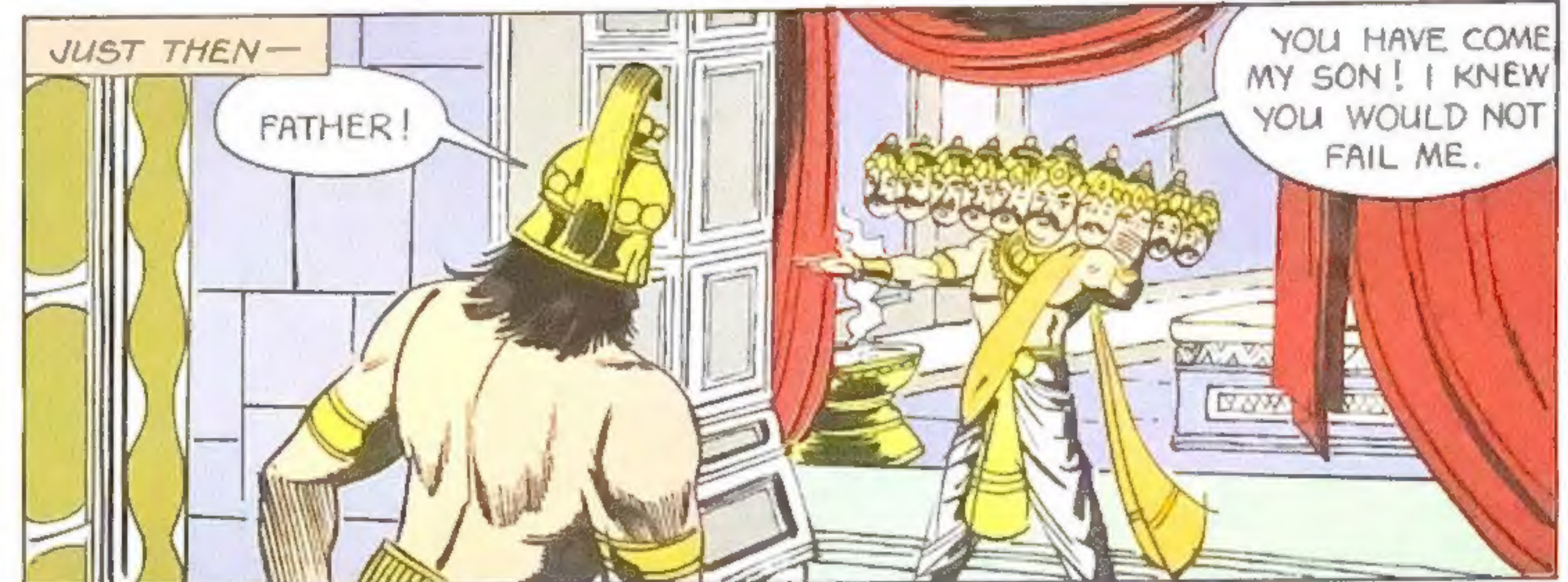
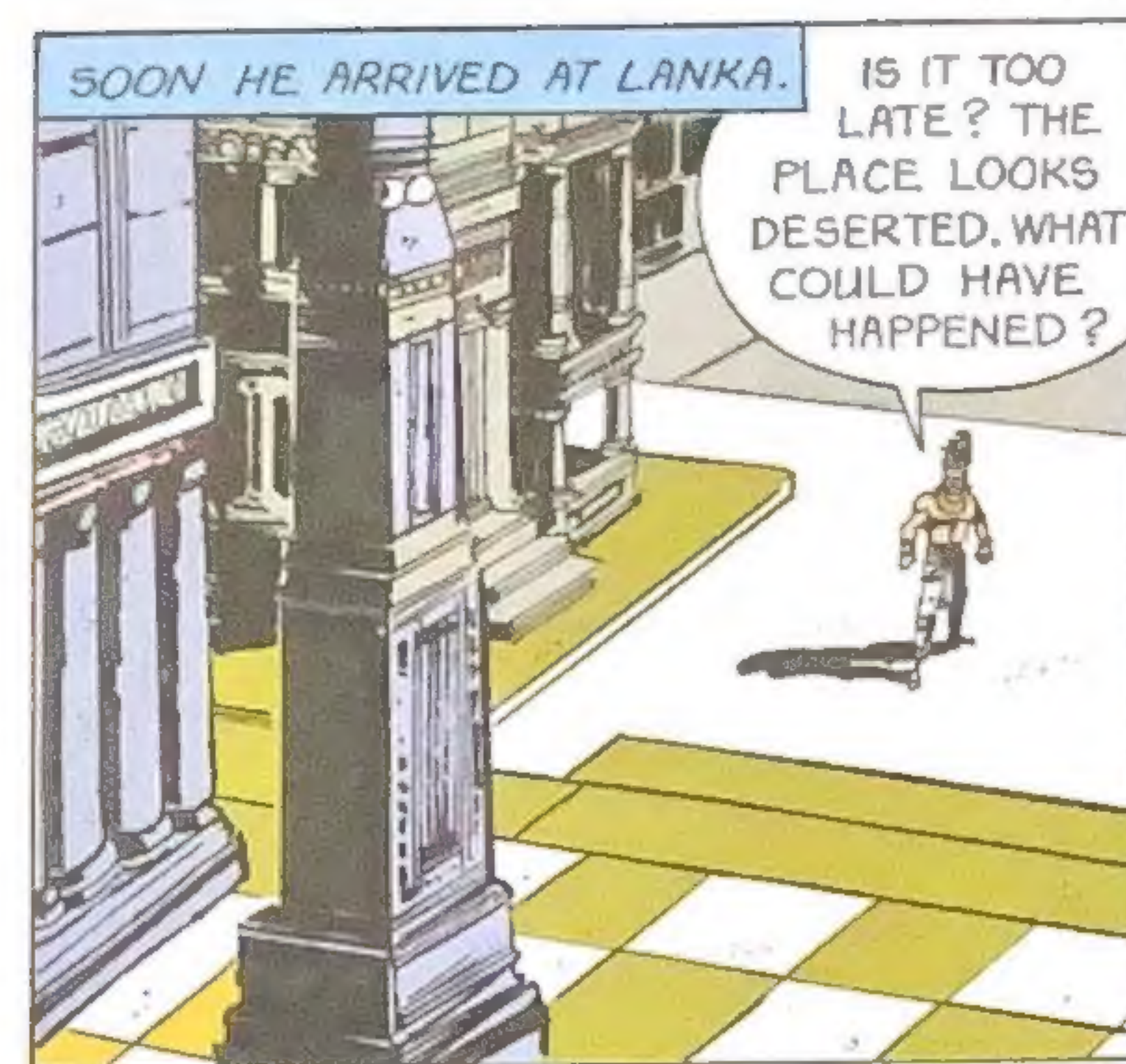
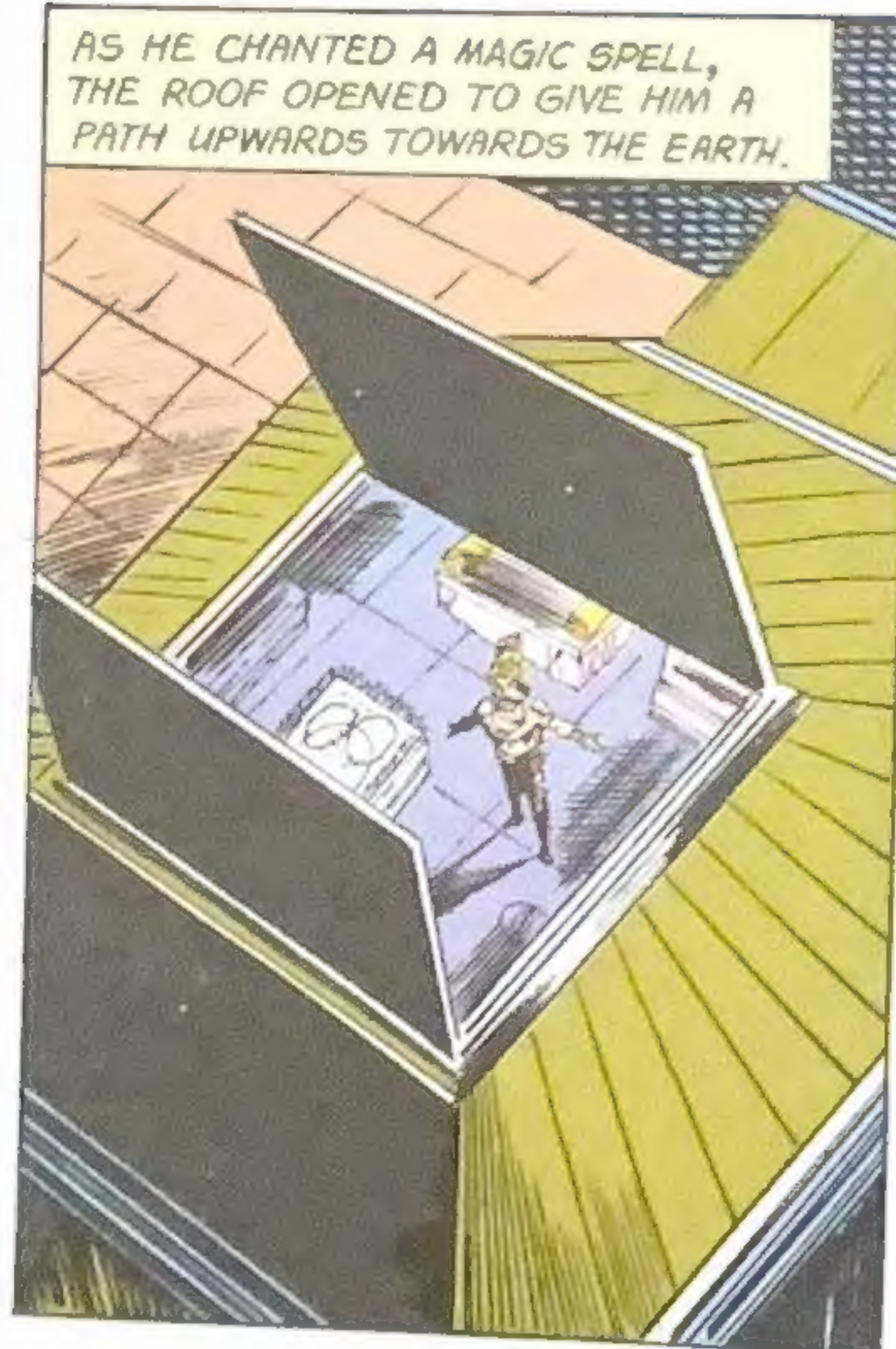
BUT WHO? WHO IS THINKING OF ME? I MUST FIND OUT.

RETIRING TO HIS CHAMBER, HE TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHO IT WAS.

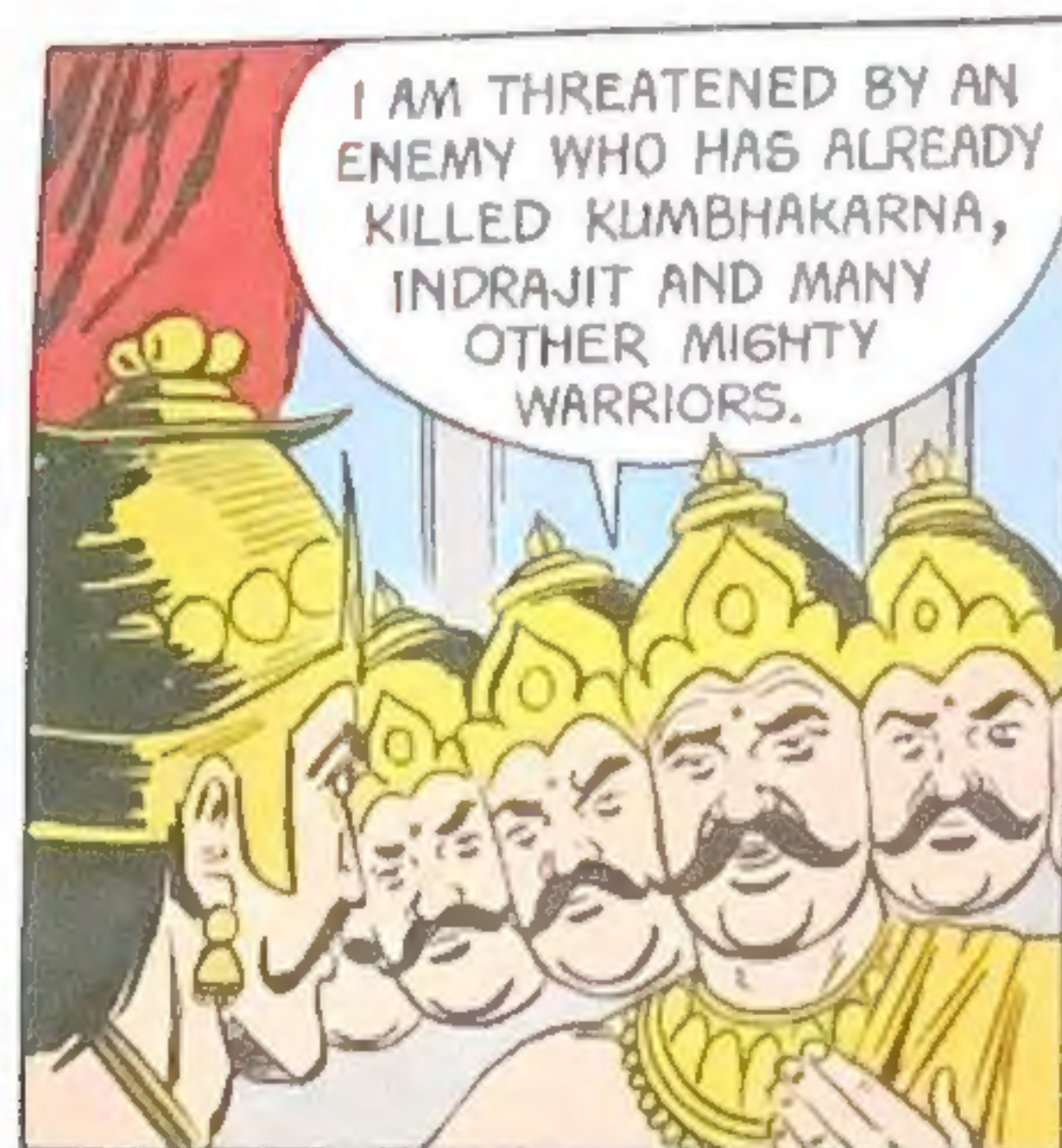
NO ONE HERE IN THE NETHER WORLD NEEDS MY HELP.



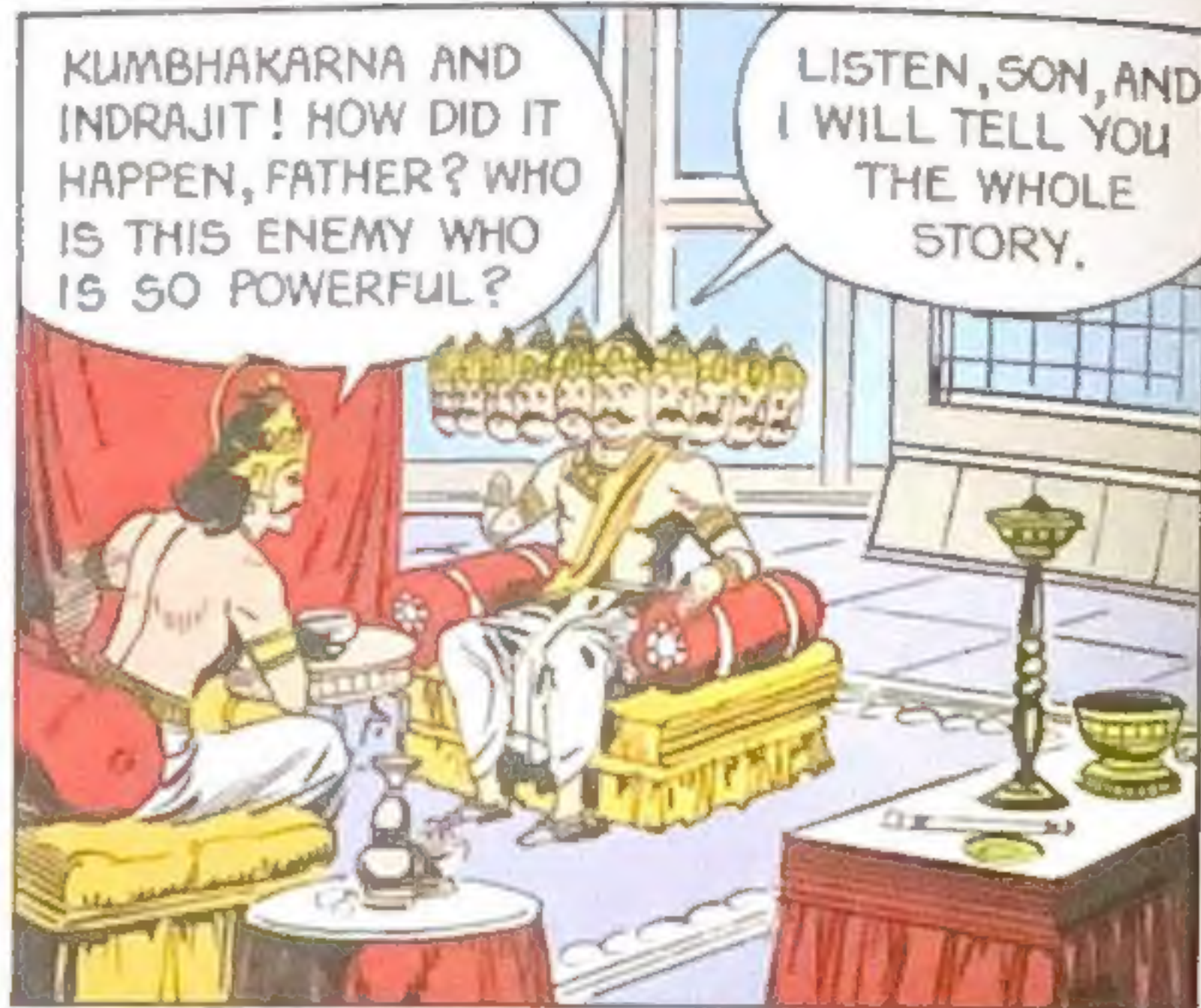






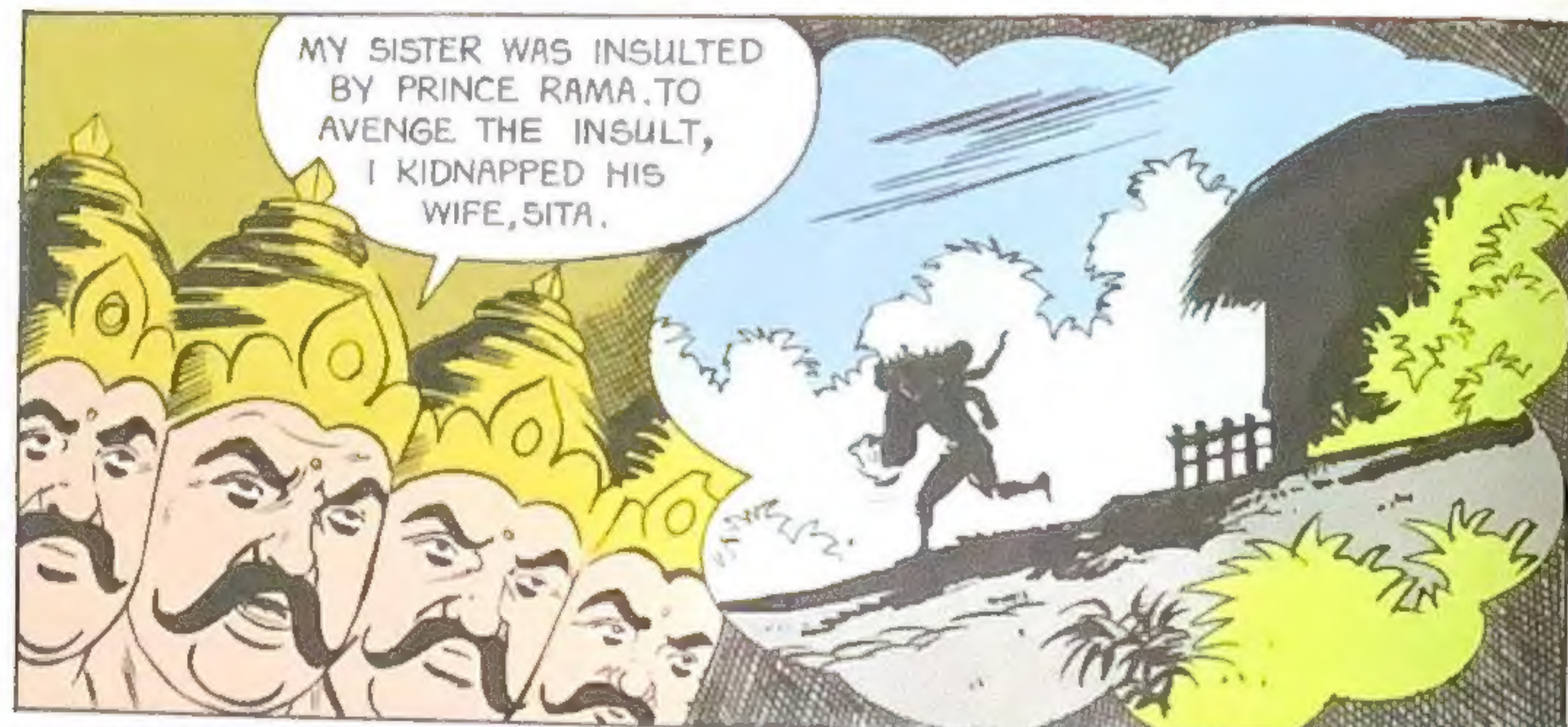


I AM THREATENED BY AN ENEMY WHO HAS ALREADY KILLED KUMBHAKARNA, INDRAJIT AND MANY OTHER MIGHTY WARRIORS.

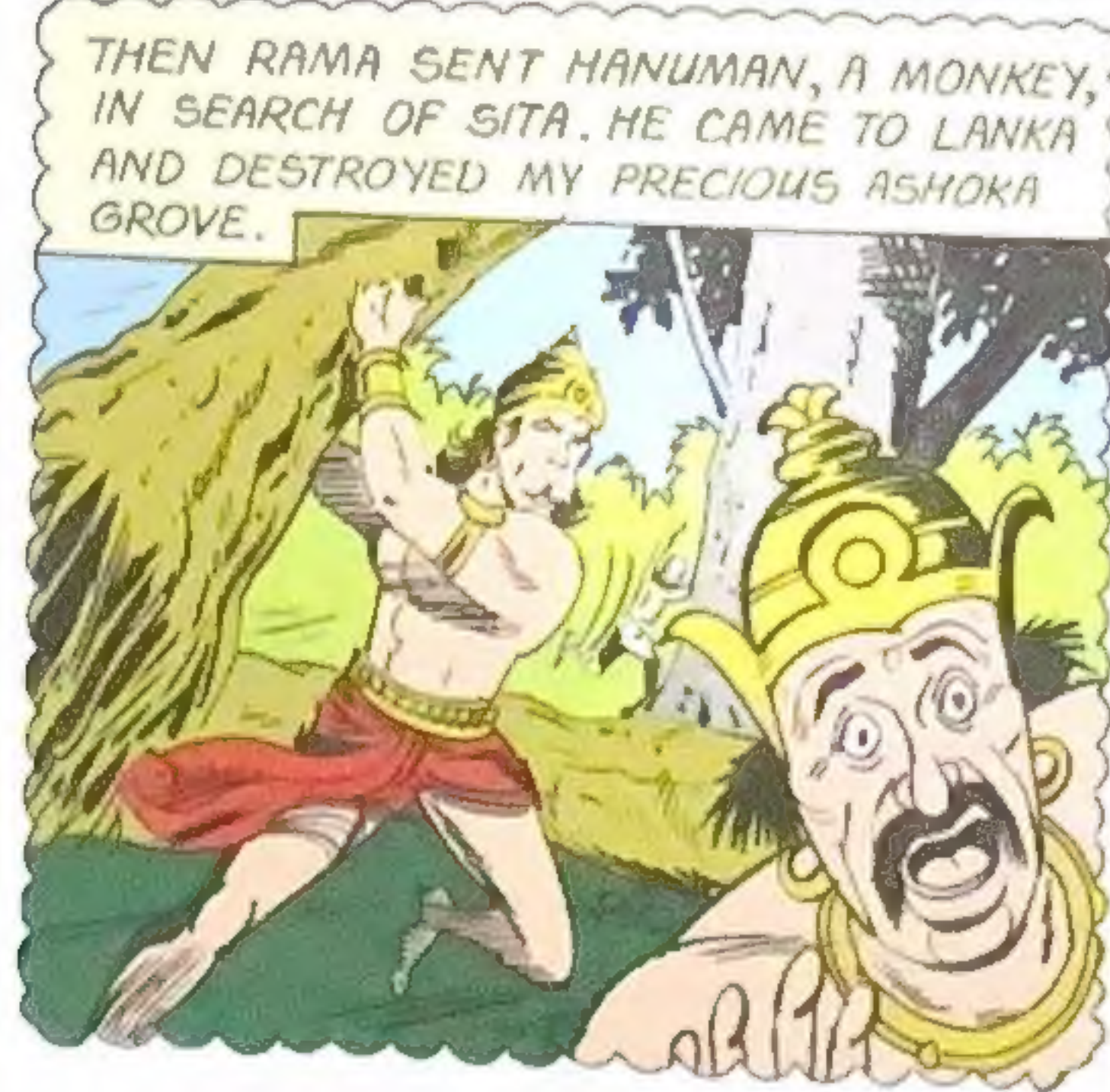


KUMBHAKARNA AND INDRAJIT! HOW DID IT HAPPEN, FATHER? WHO IS THIS ENEMY WHO IS SO POWERFUL?

LISTEN, SON, AND I WILL TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY.



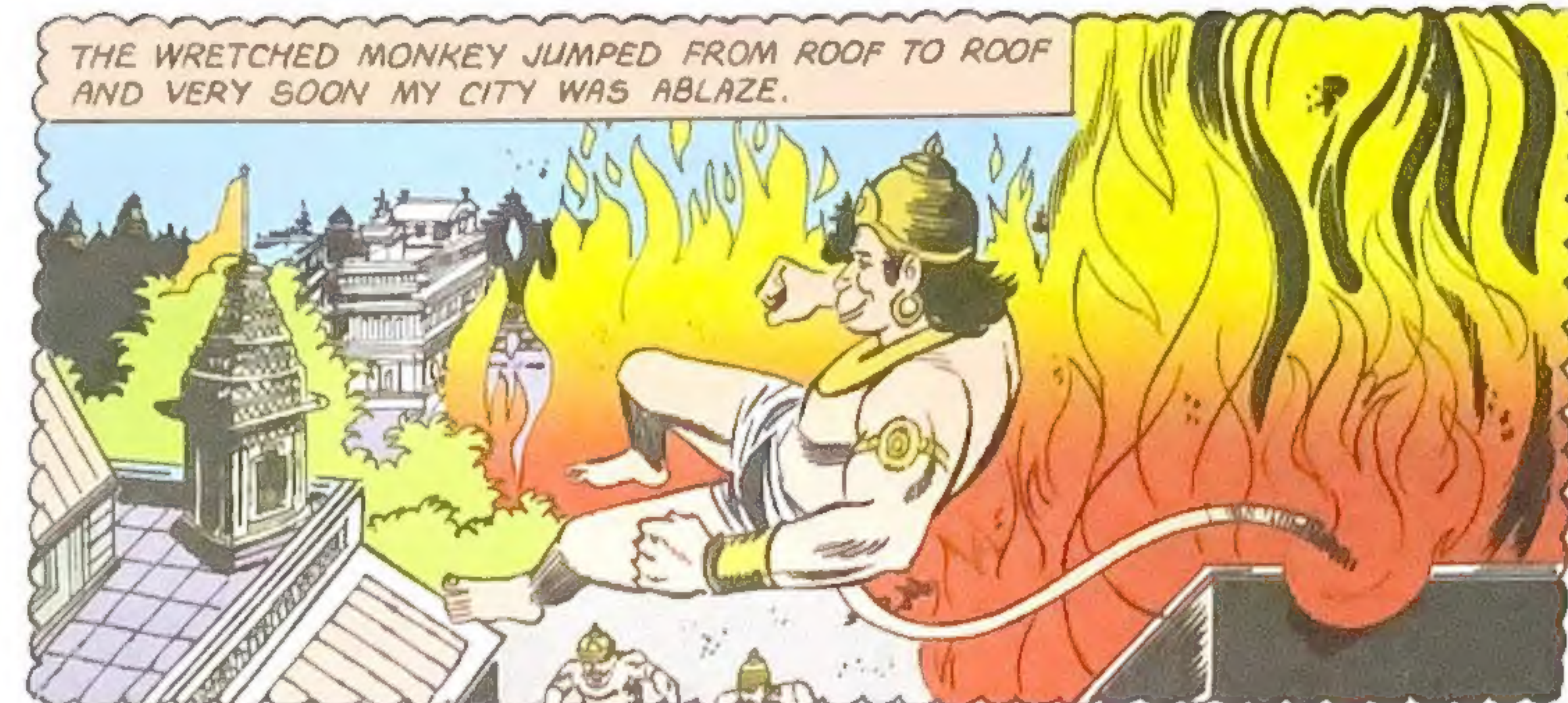
MY SISTER WAS INSULTED BY PRINCE RAMA. TO AVENGE THE INSULT, I KIDNAPPED HIS WIFE, SITA.



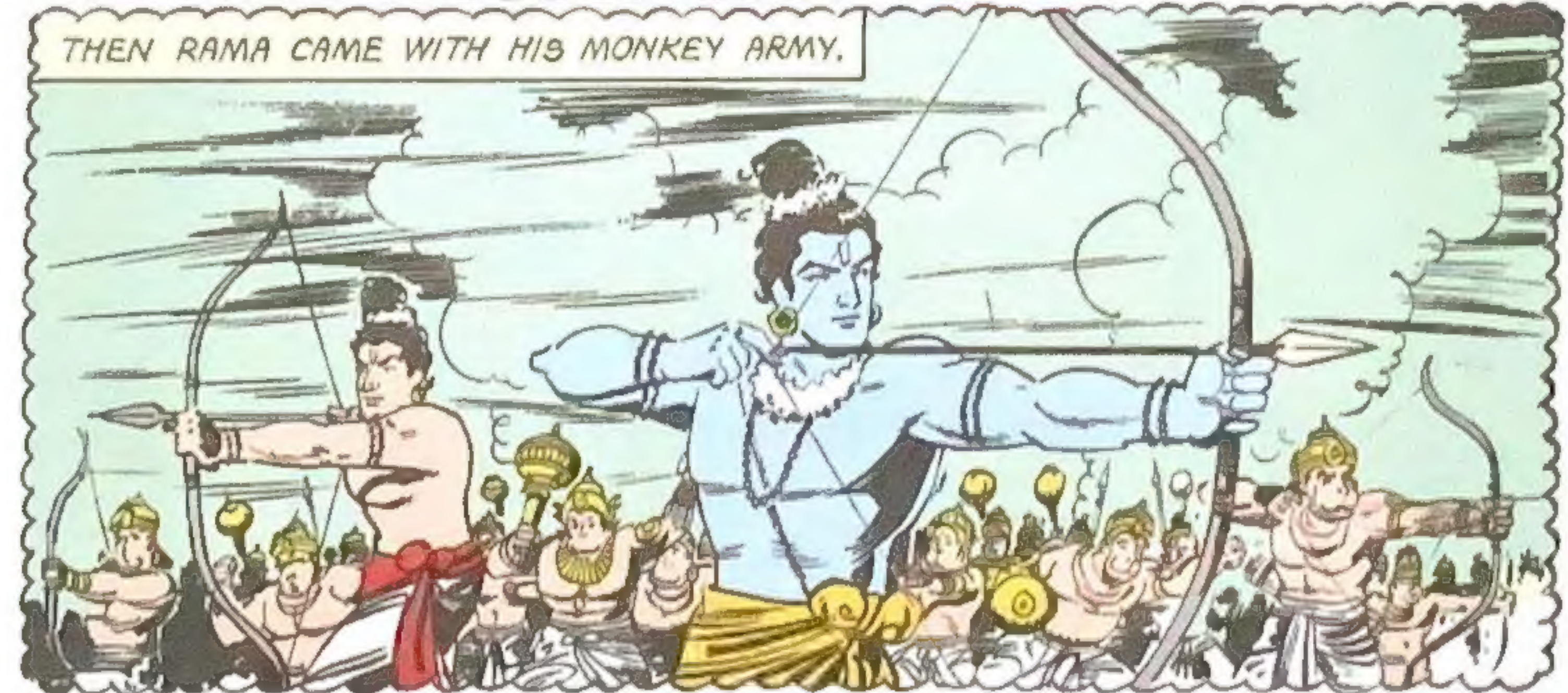
THEN RAMA SENT HANUMAN, A MONKEY, IN SEARCH OF SITA. HE CAME TO LANKA AND DESTROYED MY PRECIOUS ASHOKA GROVE.



I MANAGED TO HAVE HIM BOUND AND ORDERED HIS TAIL TO BE SET ON FIRE.



THE WRETCHED MONKEY JUMPED FROM ROOF TO ROOF AND VERY SOON MY CITY WAS ABLAZE.

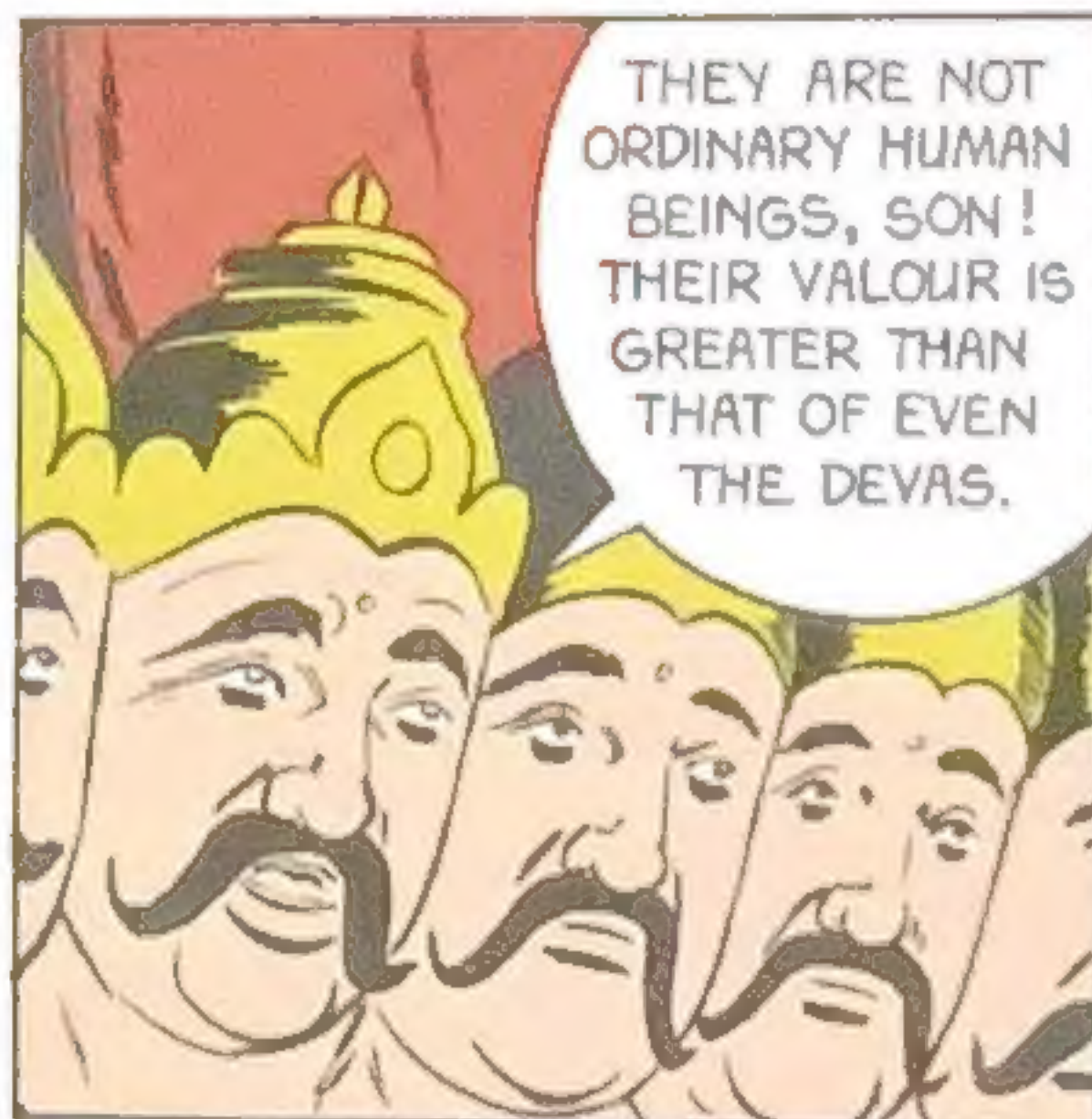
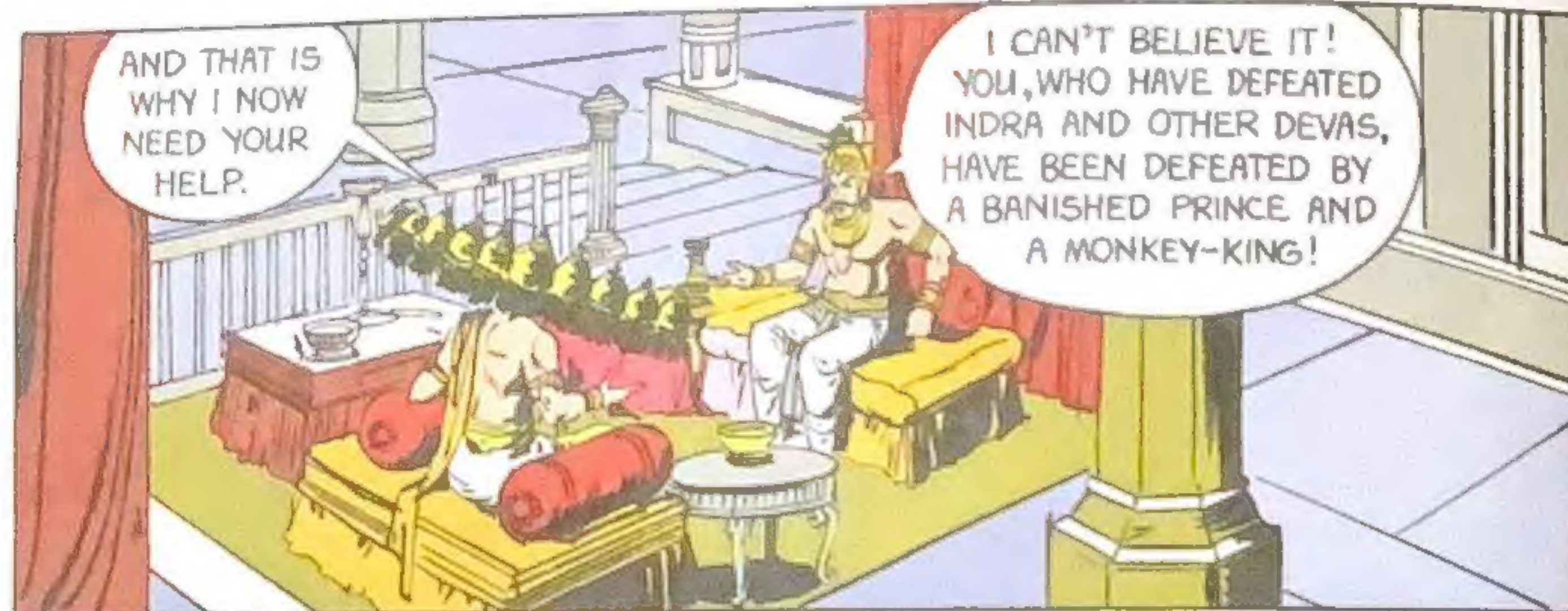


THEN RAMA CAME WITH HIS MONKEY ARMY.

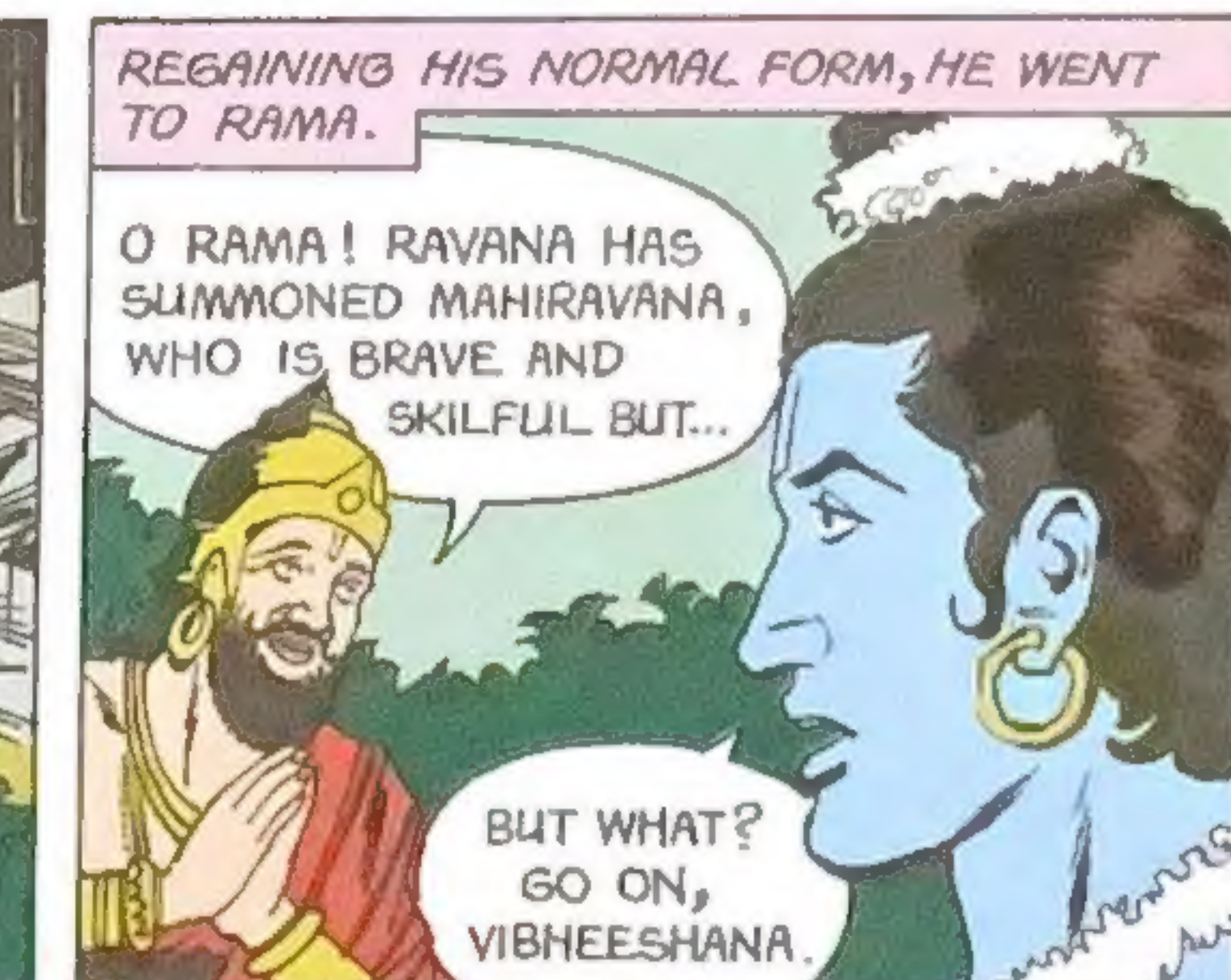
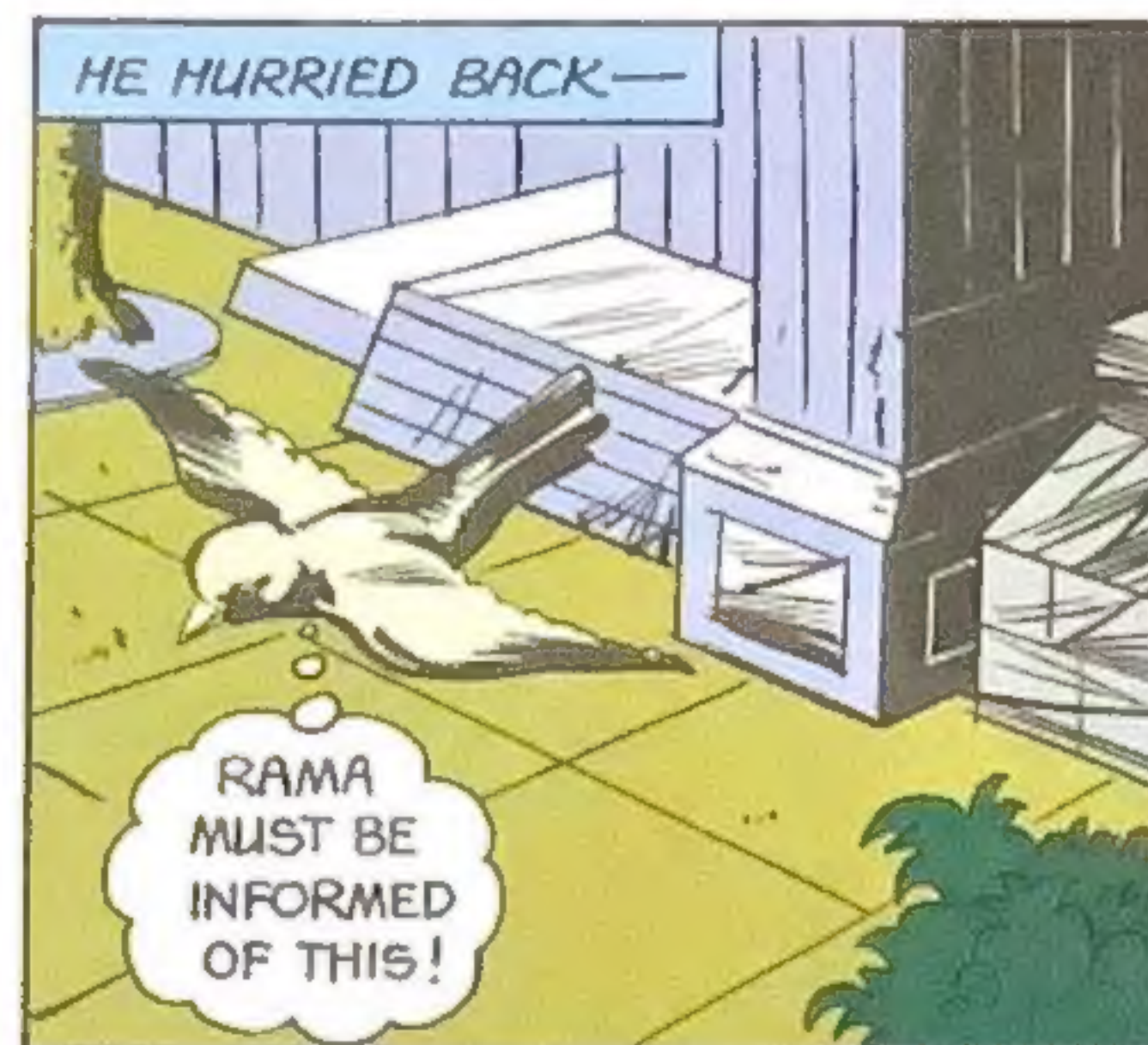


HE KILLED MANY OF MY BRAVE GENERALS AND WARRIORS.

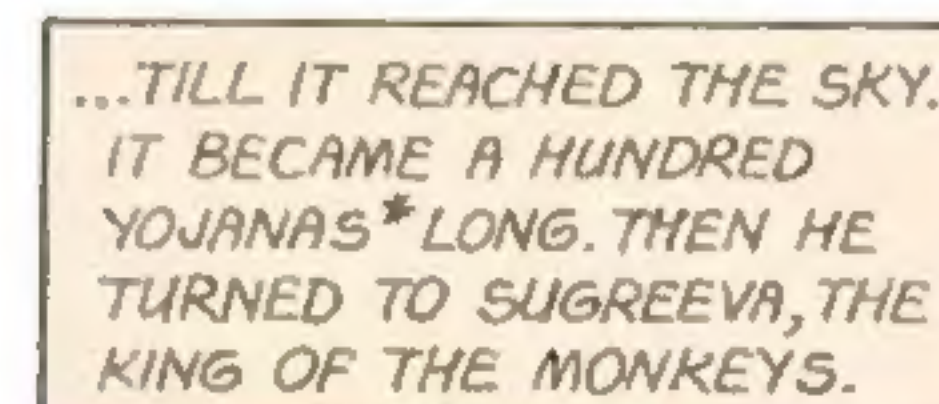
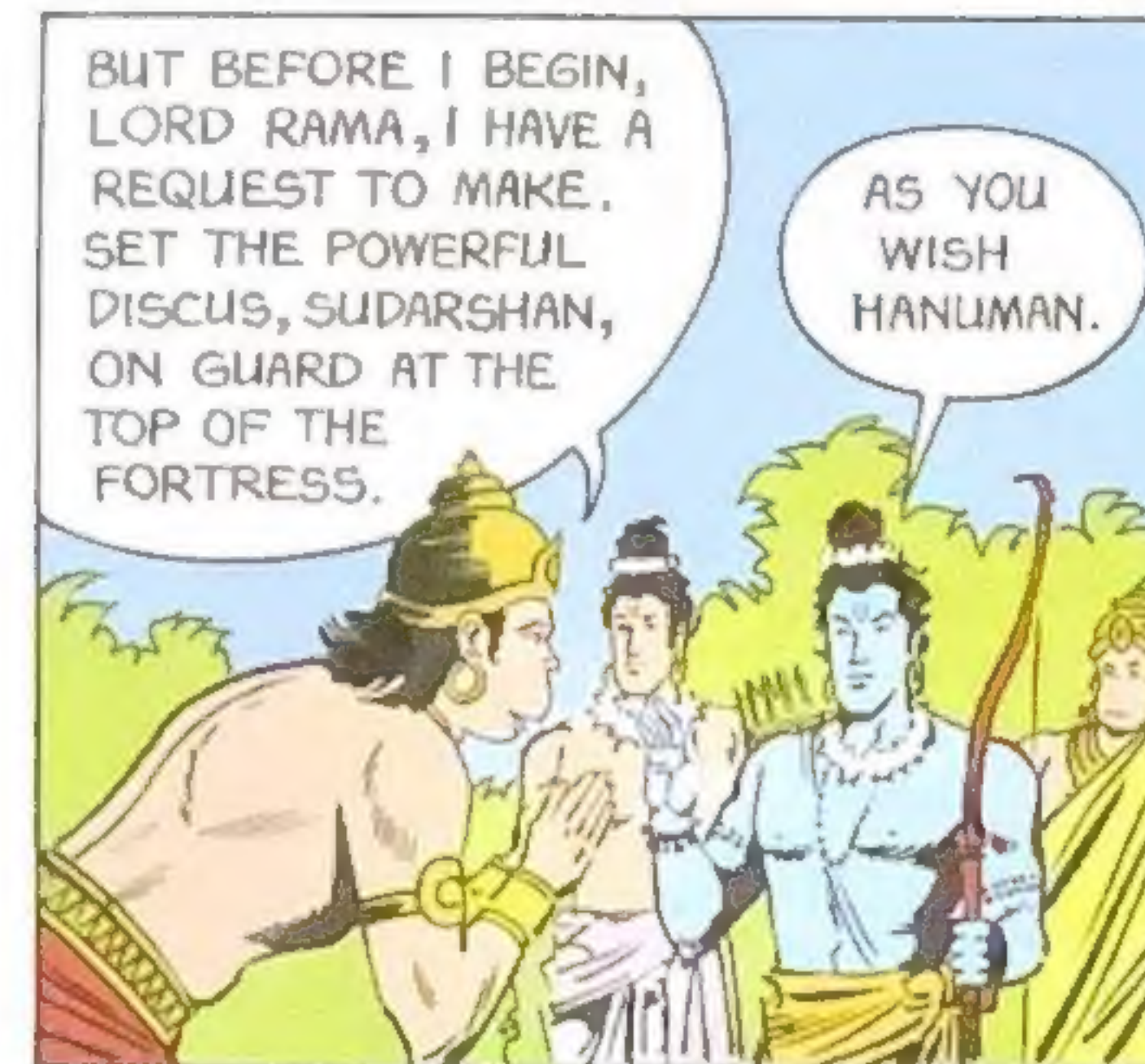




\*RAVANA'S BROTHER WHO HAD JOINED THE OPPOSITE CAMP

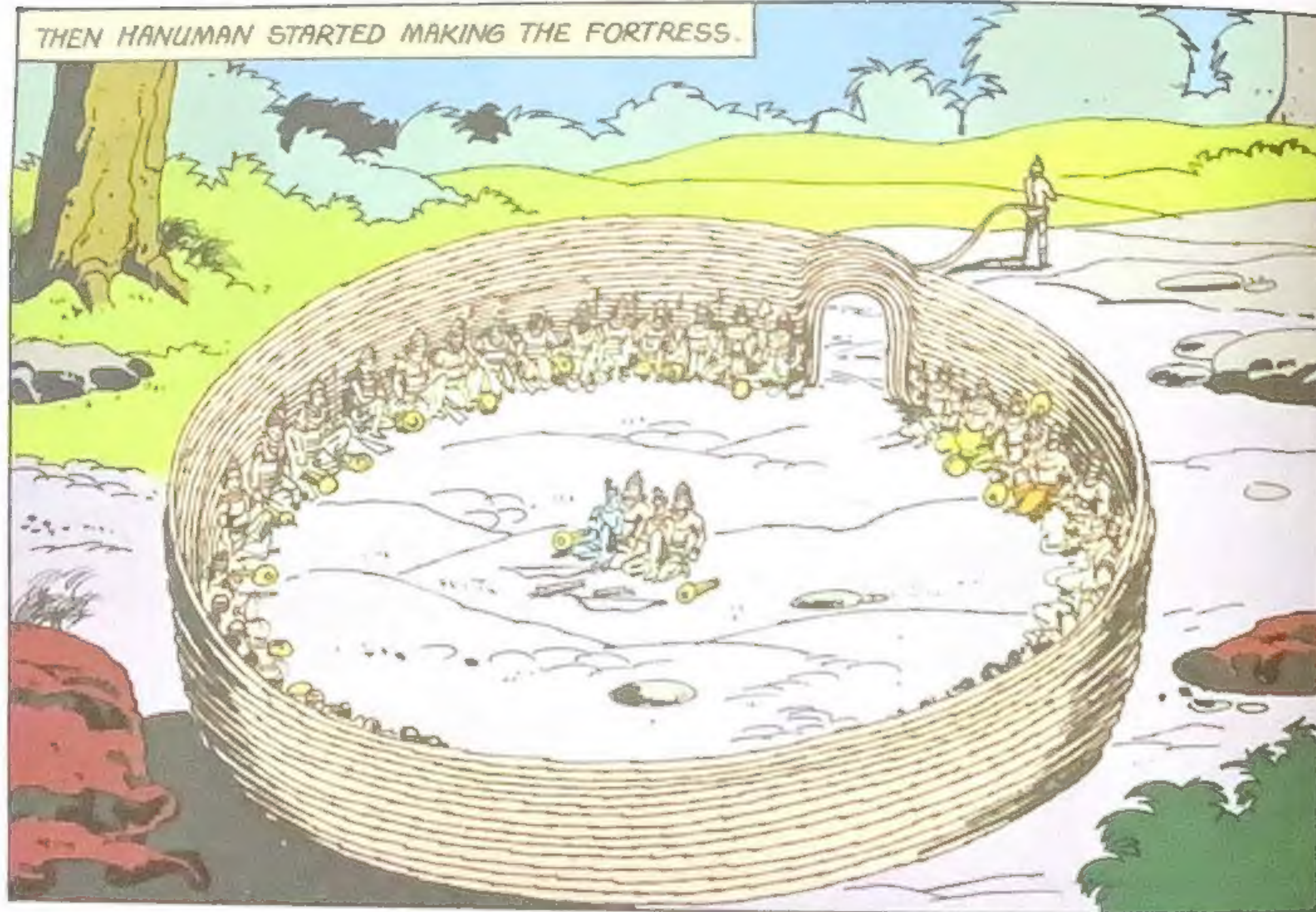




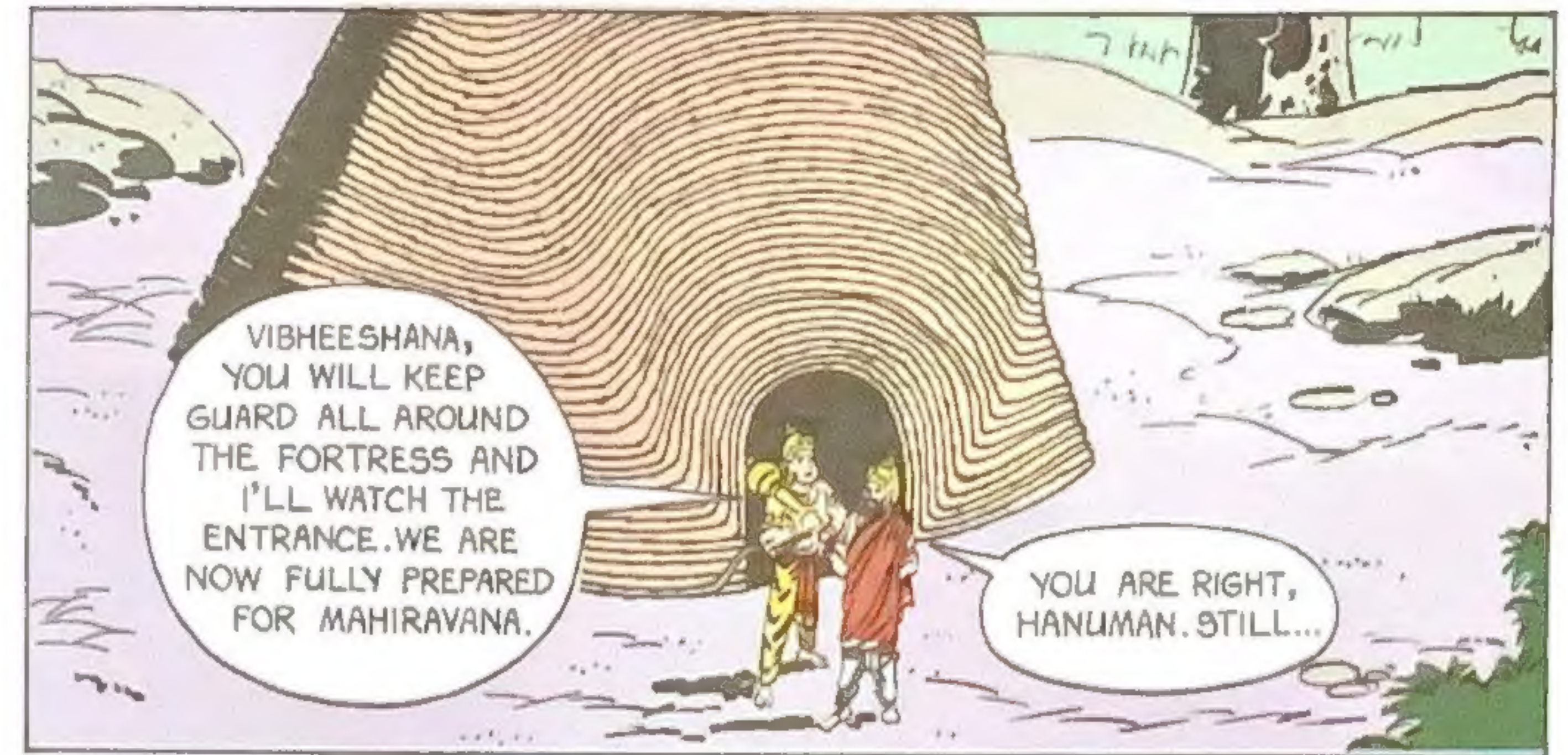
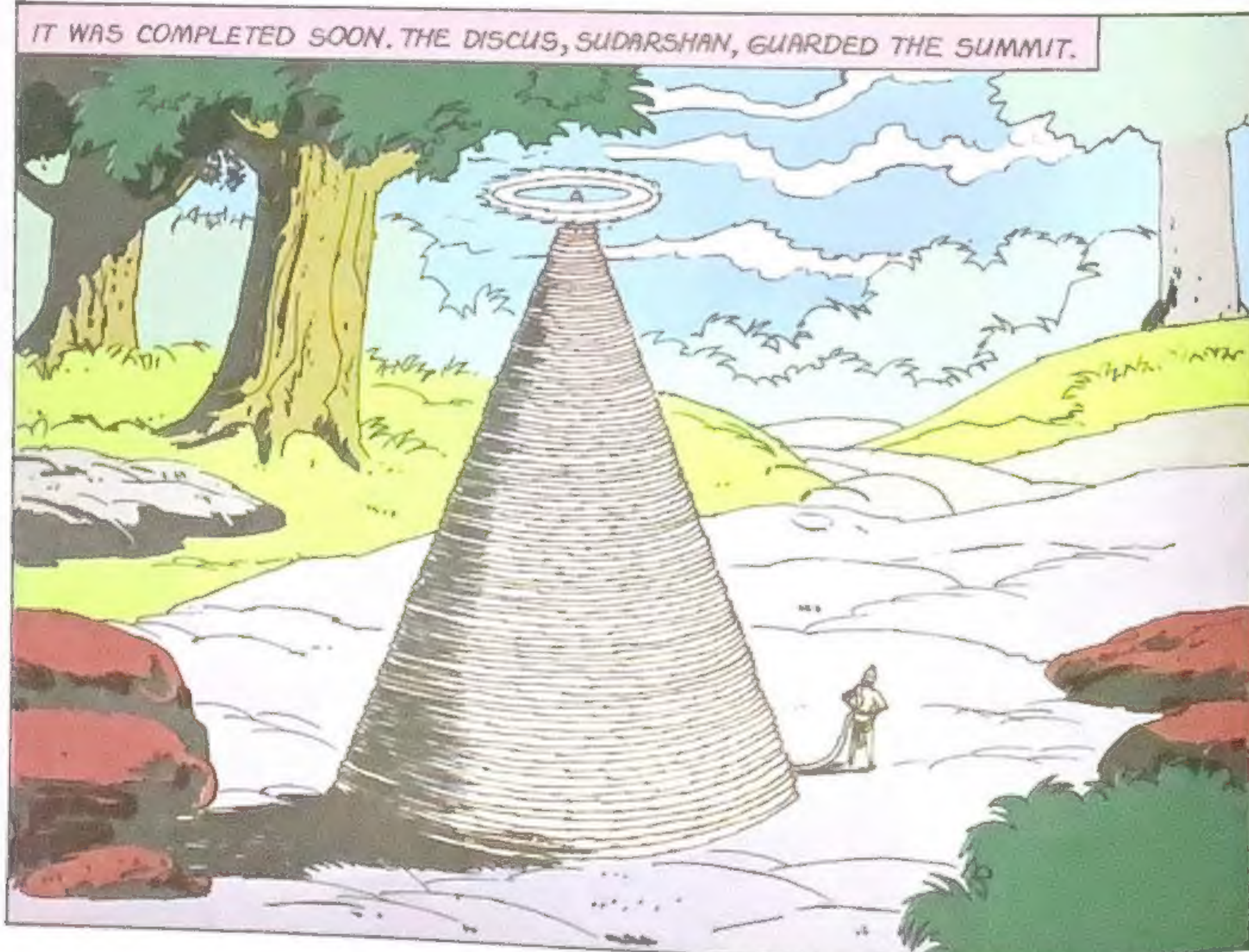




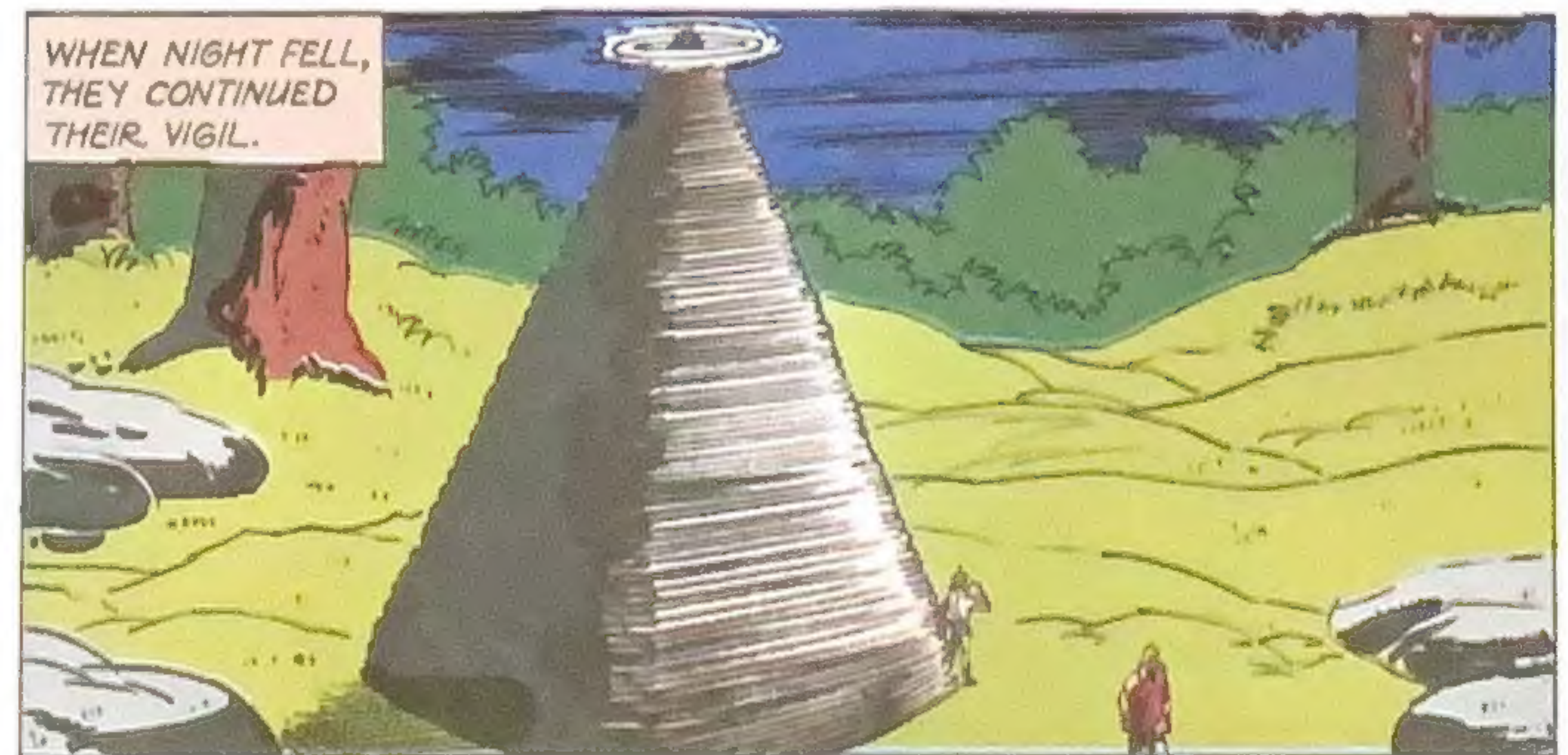
THEN HANUMAN STARTED MAKING THE FORTRESS.



IT WAS COMPLETED SOON. THE DISCUS, SUDARSHAN, GUARDED THE SUMMIT.



WHEN NIGHT FELL,  
THEY CONTINUED  
THEIR VIGIL.





MEANWHILE, IN LANKA, RAVANA AND MAHIRAVANA WERE NOT IDLE. THEY, TOO, WERE MAKING CAREFUL PLANS.

NOW FATHER, LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME. I'LL TAKE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA AWAY TO THE NETHER WORLD AND SACRIFICE THEM THERE TO THE GODDESS, DURGA.

YOU HAVE TAKEN A LOAD OFF MY CHEST, SON.



MAHIRAVANA DEPARTED. HE TOOK NO MEN, NO HORSES AND NO WEAPONS. ENDOWED AS HE WAS WITH MAGIC POWERS, WITHIN MINUTES HE HAD REACHED RAMA'S CAMP.

HMM...VERY CLEVER! THE DISCUS BARS THE WAY FROM THE SKY.



BUT SOON AFTER VIBHEESHANA LEFT—

O MIGHTY HANUMAN! I AM DASHARATHA, RAMA'S FATHER. LET ME ENTER. I WANT TO MEET MY SONS.

KING DASHARATHA!



PLEASE WAIT FOR A MINUTE, MY LORD. VIBHEESHANA WILL SOON BE COMING THIS WAY AND WILL TAKE YOU IN.



RAMA AND LAKSHMANA MUST BE IN THAT FORTRESS. BUT HOW SHALL I GET PAST THE MONKEY TO REACH THEM?



THAT WAS INDEED A DIFFICULT PROBLEM, FOR HANUMAN WAS KEEPING A STRICT WATCH.

I WILL KEEP GUARD ROUND THE FORTRESS. REMEMBER, NOT EVEN YOUR FATHER IS TO BE ALLOWED IN.



AH! HERE HE COMES.



KING DASHARATHA IS HERE, VIBHEESHANA, TO MEET HIS SONS.

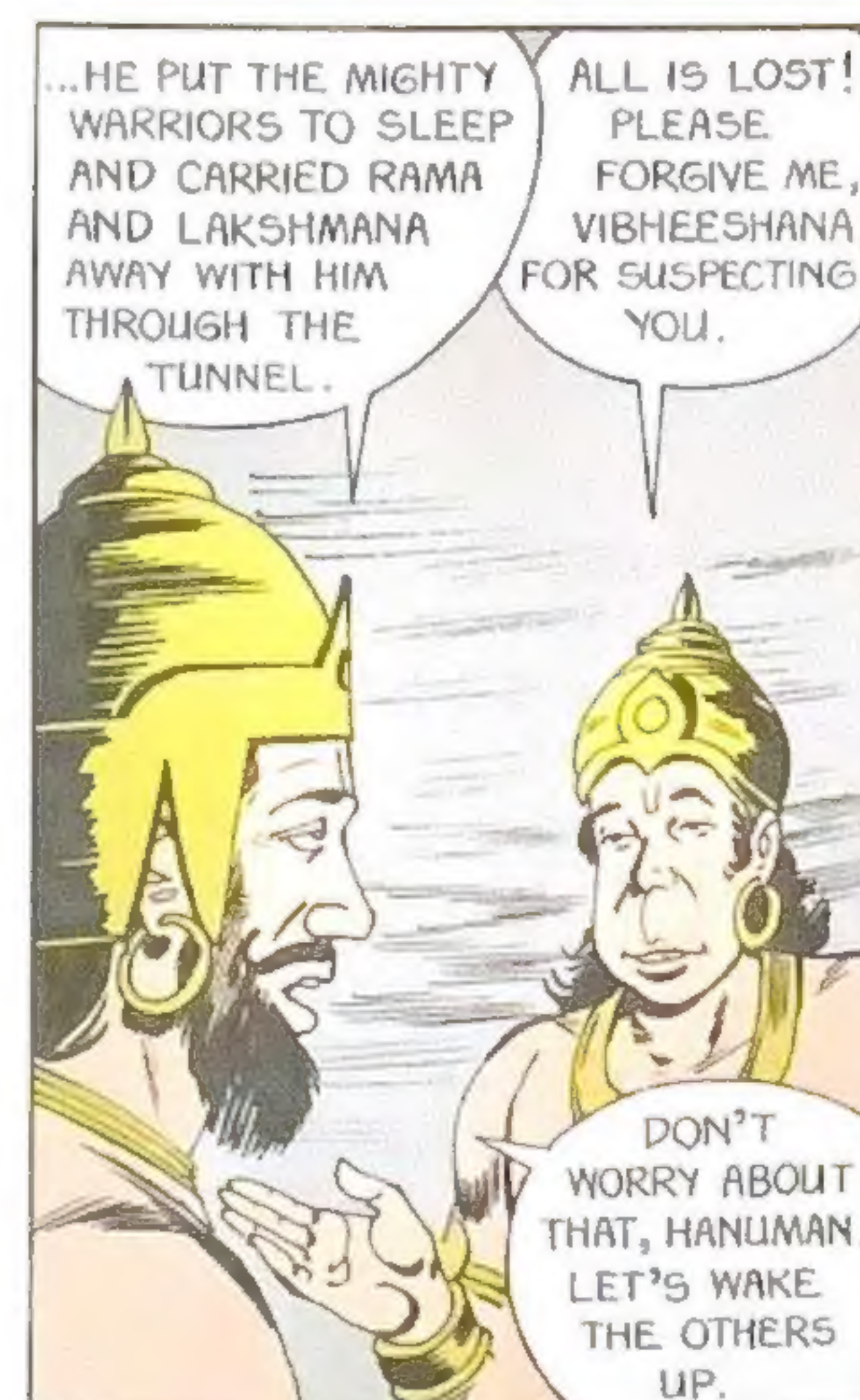
KING DASHARATHA? I SEE NO ONE HERE!













SOON, EVERYONE WAS WIDE AWAKE.

O KING SUGREEVA!  
RAMA AND LAKSHMANA  
HAVE BEEN CARRIED  
AWAY BY MAHIRAVANA.  
I AM NOT FIT TO LIVE!  
IT WAS ALL MY  
FAULT.

NO! AS YOUR  
KING, THE  
BLAME MUST  
FALL ON ME.

AND ON ME  
TOO. I HAVE  
FAILED IN  
MY DUTY!



EV JAMBIVAN, THE WISE ONE, SPOKE OUT.

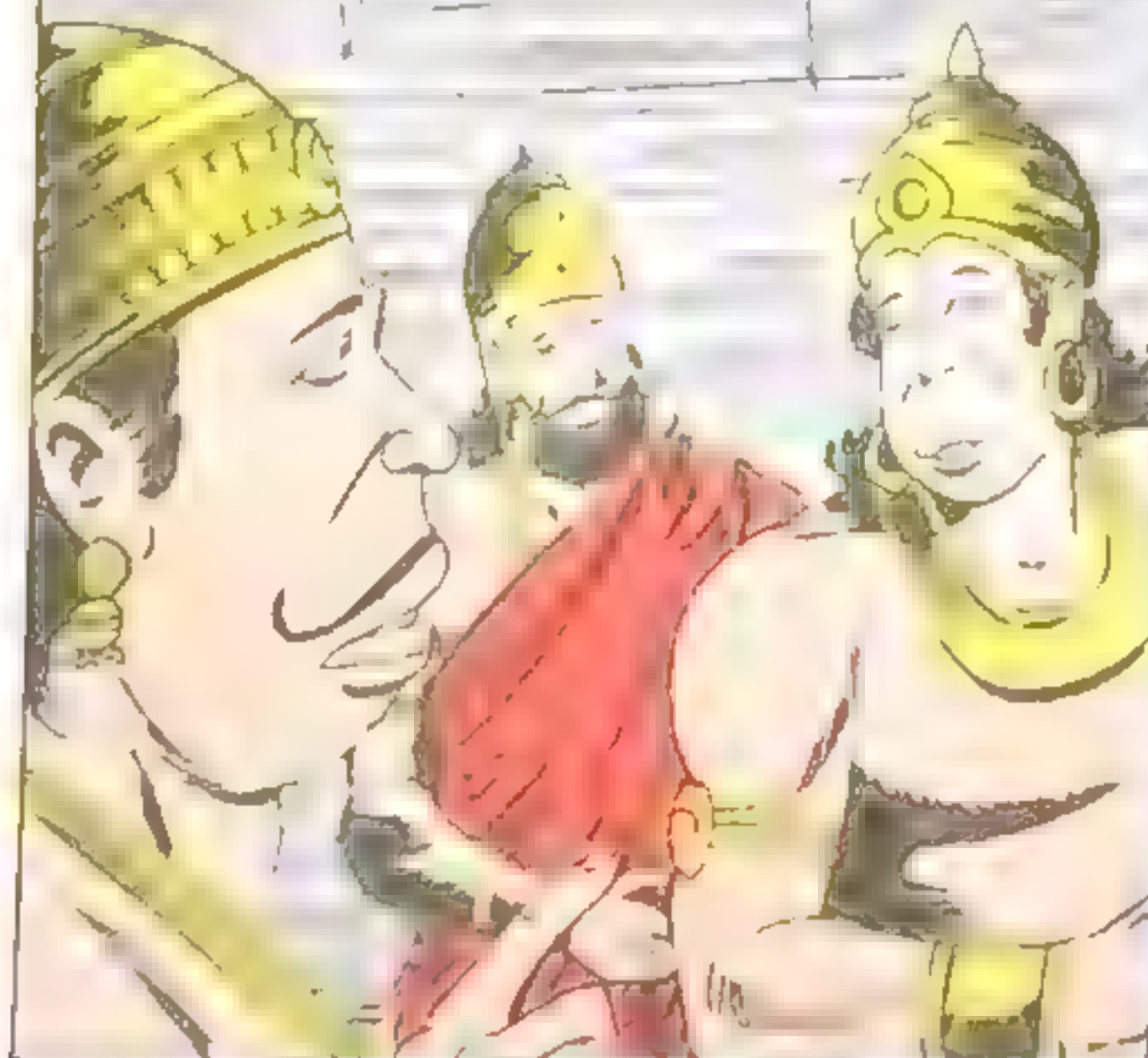
THE BLAME MUST  
BE SHARED EQUALLY  
BY ALL OF US. BUT WHY  
WASTE TIME? LET US  
THINK OF A WAY  
OF RESCUING THEM.  
HANUMAN SHOULD  
GO AND FIND  
THEM.

YES.  
IF ANYONE  
CAN FIND  
THEM, IT IS  
HANUMAN.

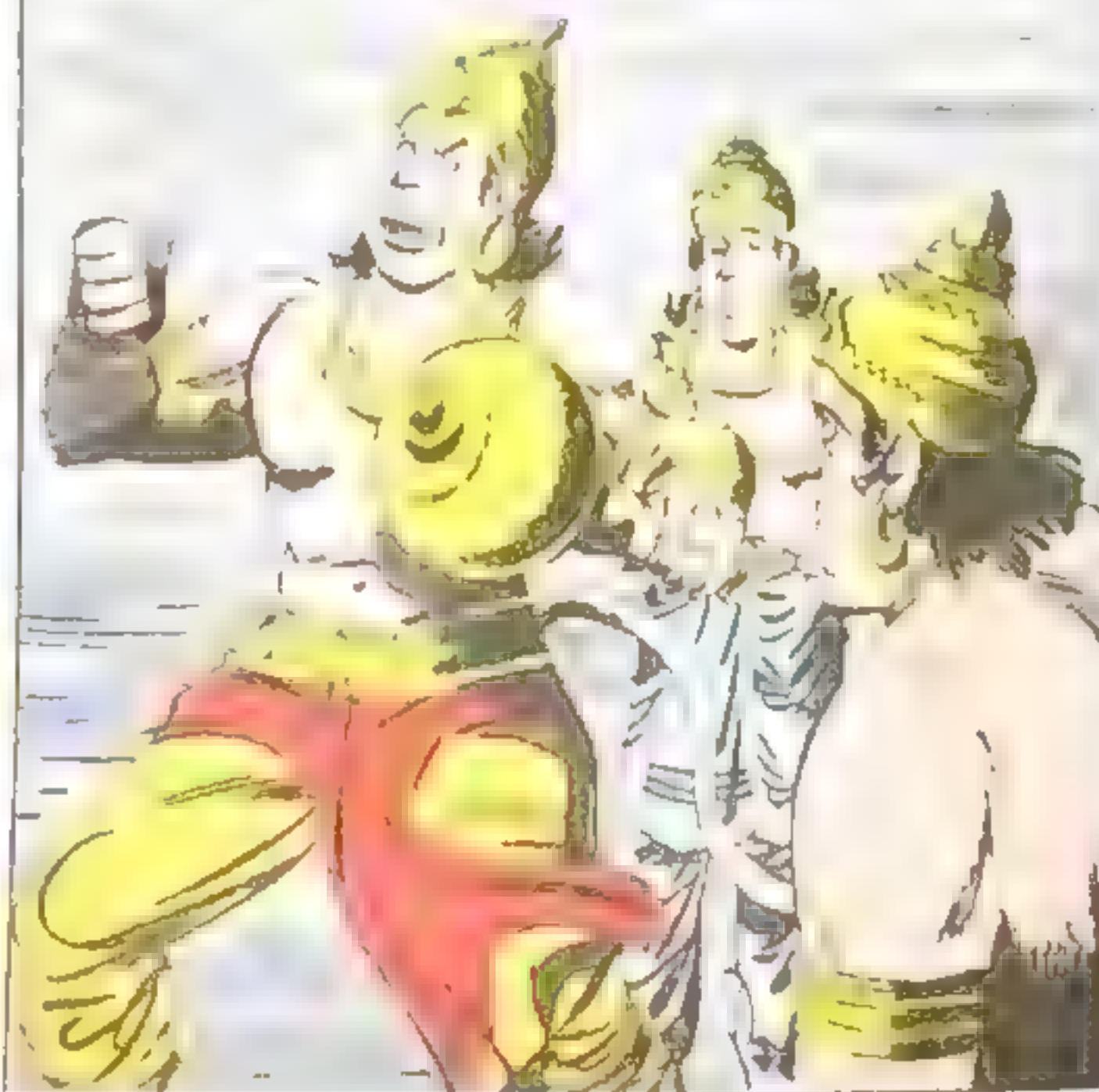


O HANUMAN, YOU  
CROSSED THE  
MIGHTY OCEAN TO  
RESCUE SITA. ONLY  
YOU CAN PERFORM  
THIS TASK NOW  
WE DEPEND  
UPON YOU.

MY HEAD BOWS  
LOW WITH  
SHAME, MY LORD,  
FOR I LET THE  
DEAR ONES BE  
CARRIED AWAY  
UNDER OUR  
VERY EYES!



TO ATONE I'LL SEARCH  
THE THREE WORLDS  
TILL I FIND THEM,  
FOR WITHOUT THEM  
I CANNOT LIVE



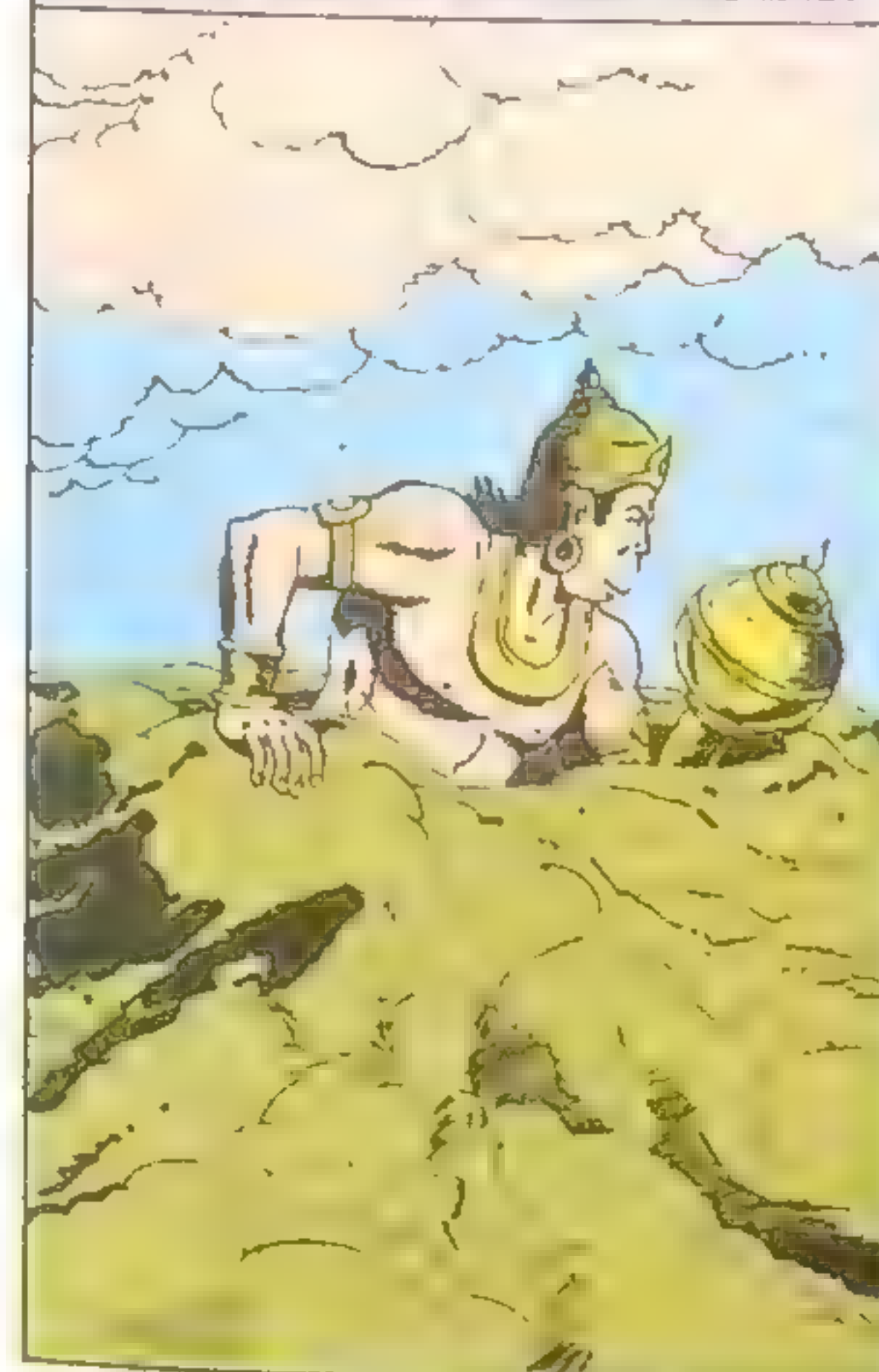
HANUMAN'S TAIL CAME BACK TO ITS  
NORMAL SIZE. BIDDING THEM FAREWELL,  
HANUMAN ENTERED THE TUNNEL MADE  
BY MAHIRAVANA.



HE TRAVELLED THROUGH  
THE LONG TUNNEL.



..TILL AT LAST HE REACHED THE END.

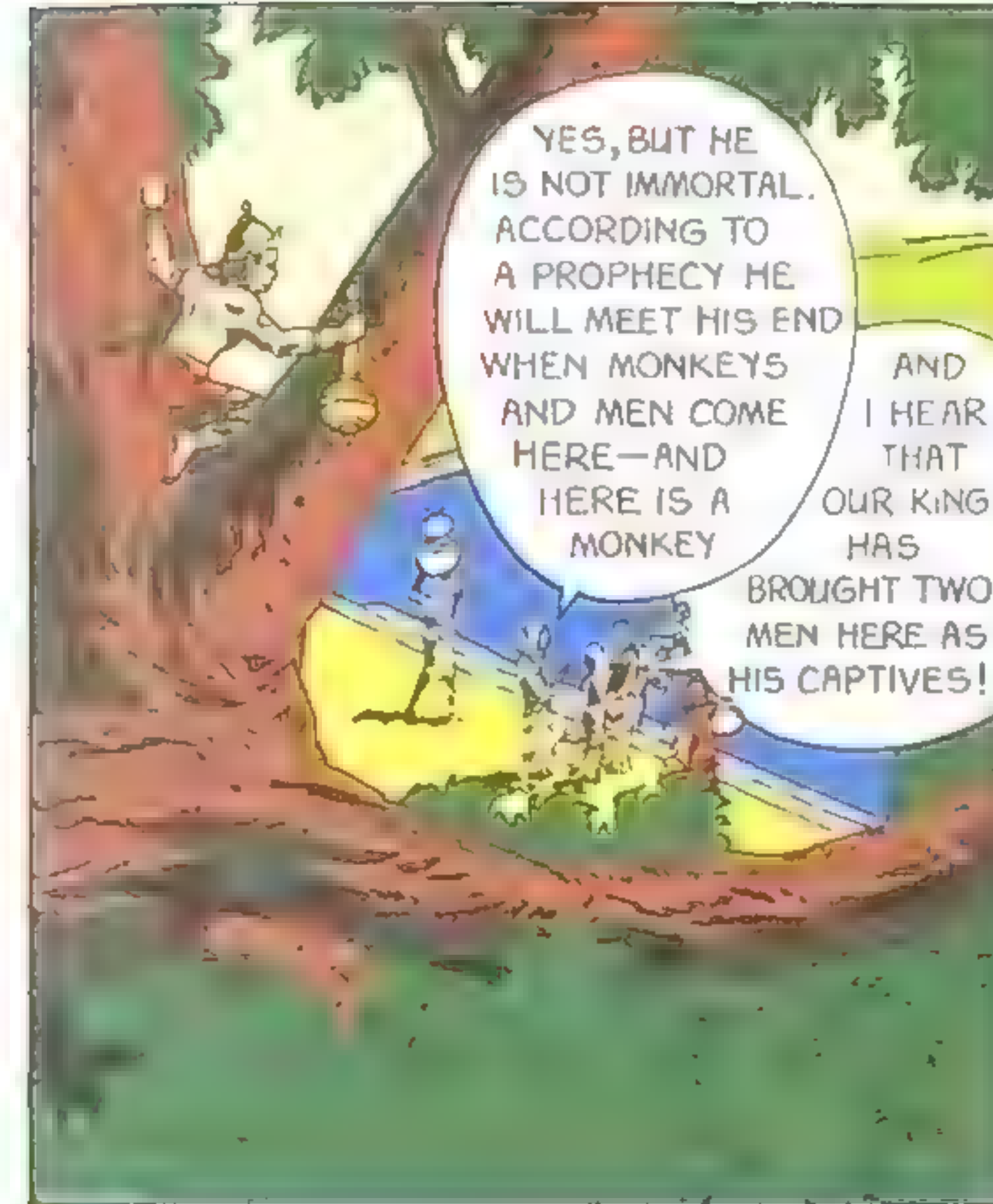
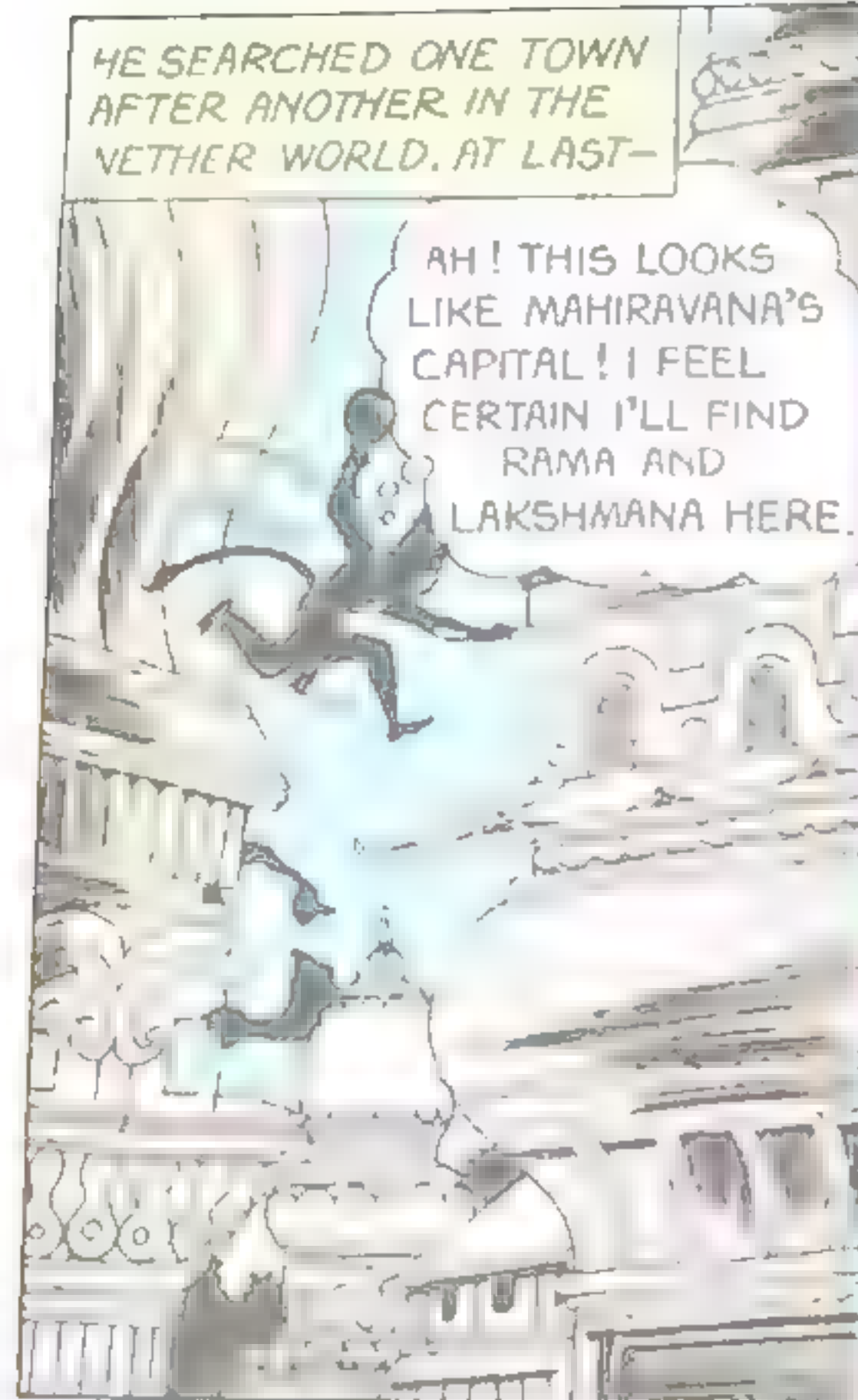


THE NETHER WORLD STRETCHED OUT IN  
FRONT OF HIM.

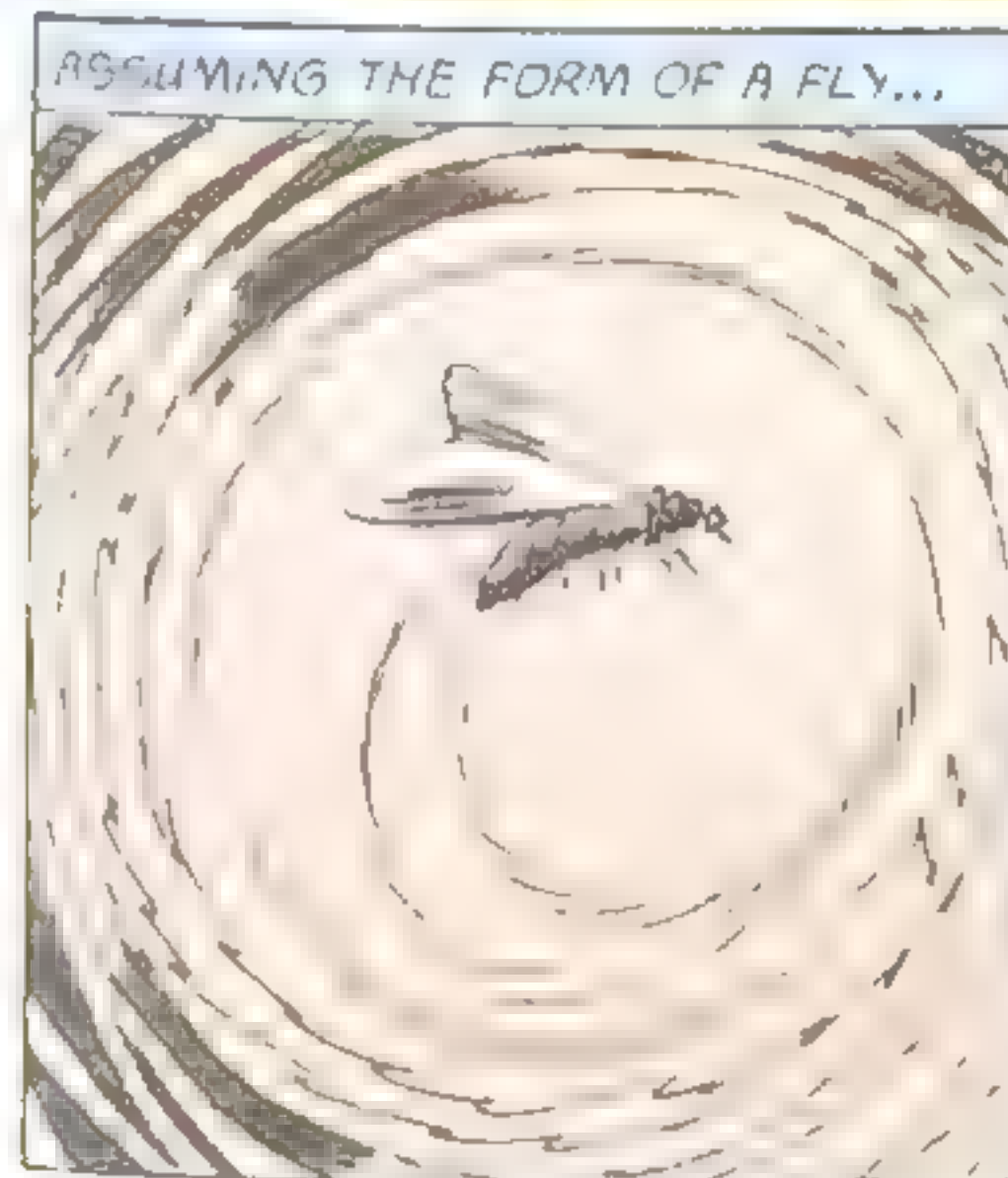
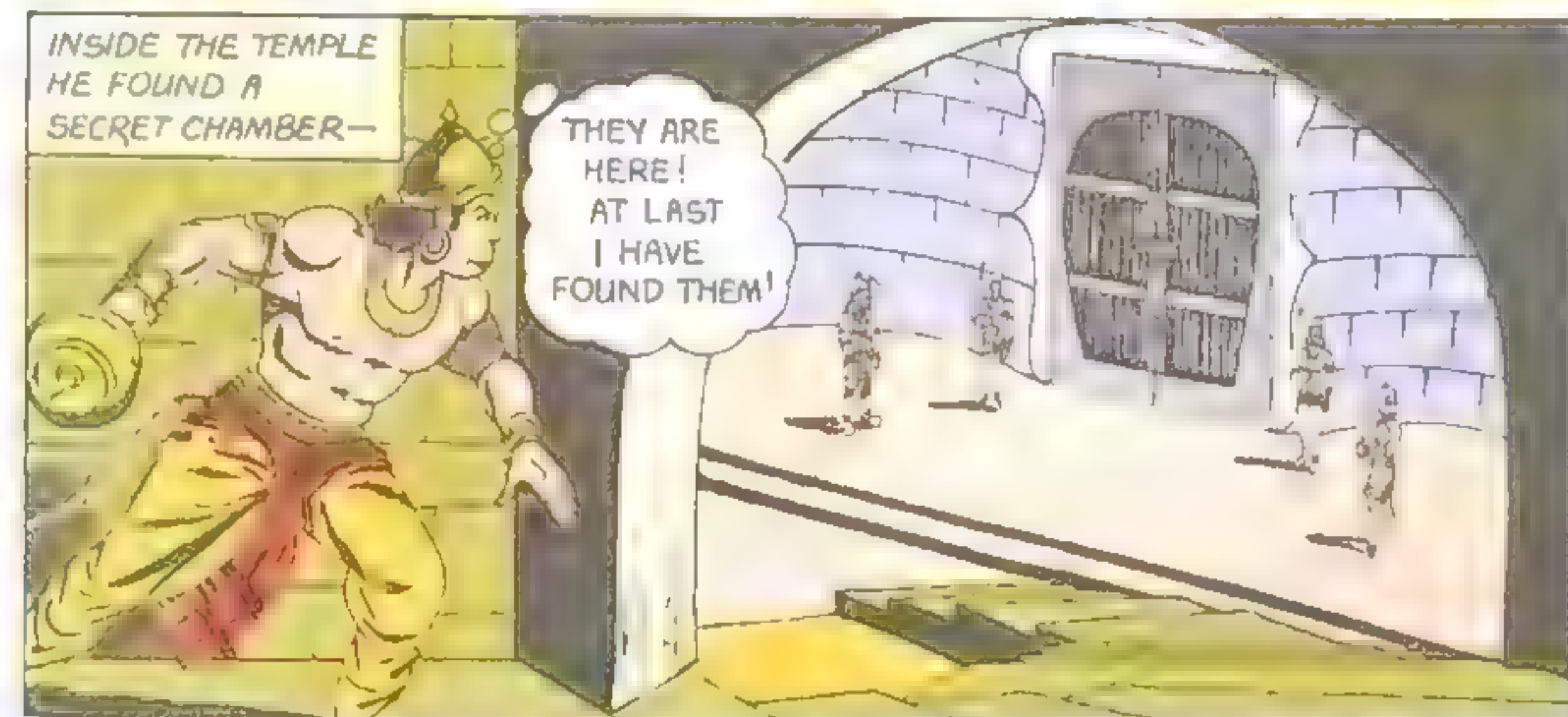
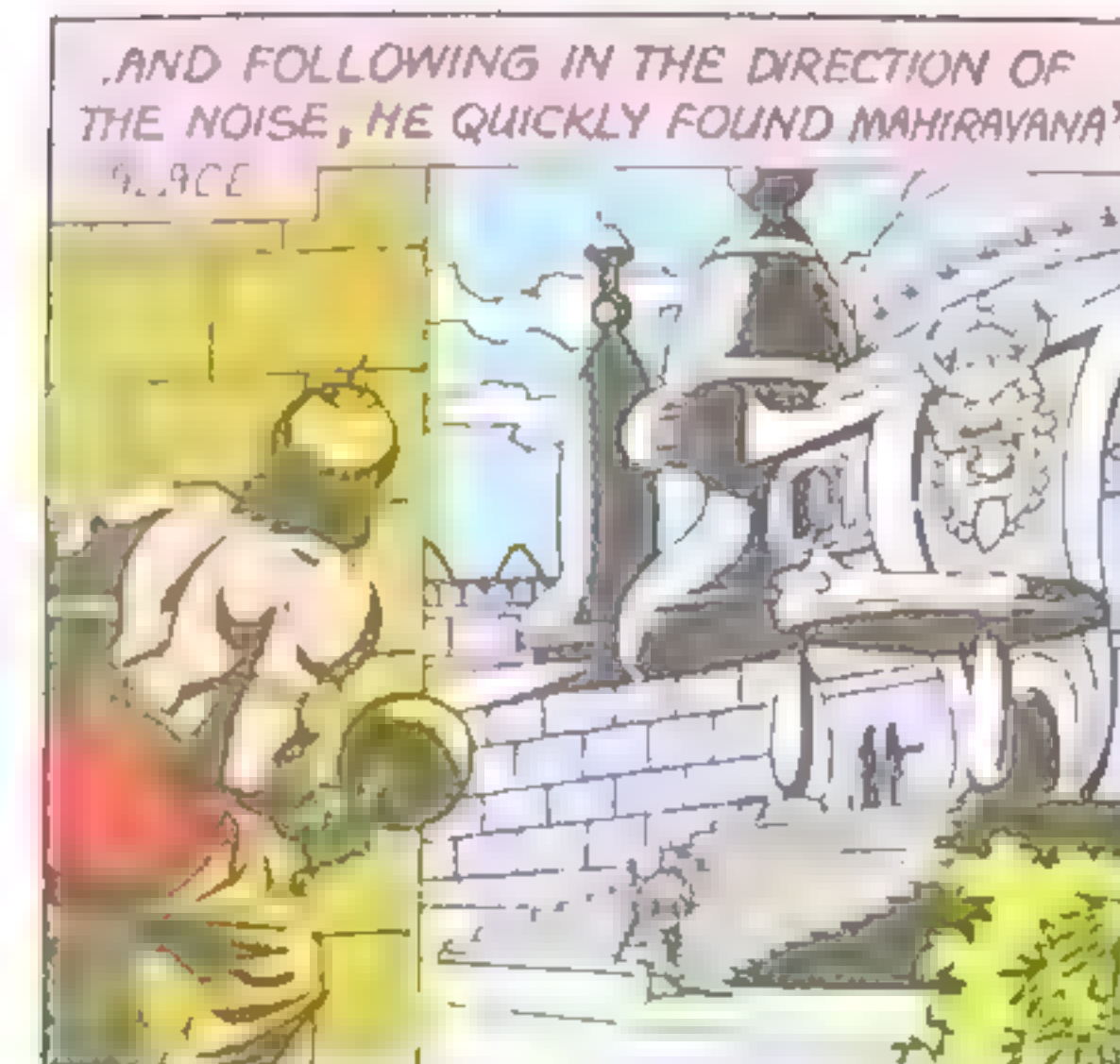
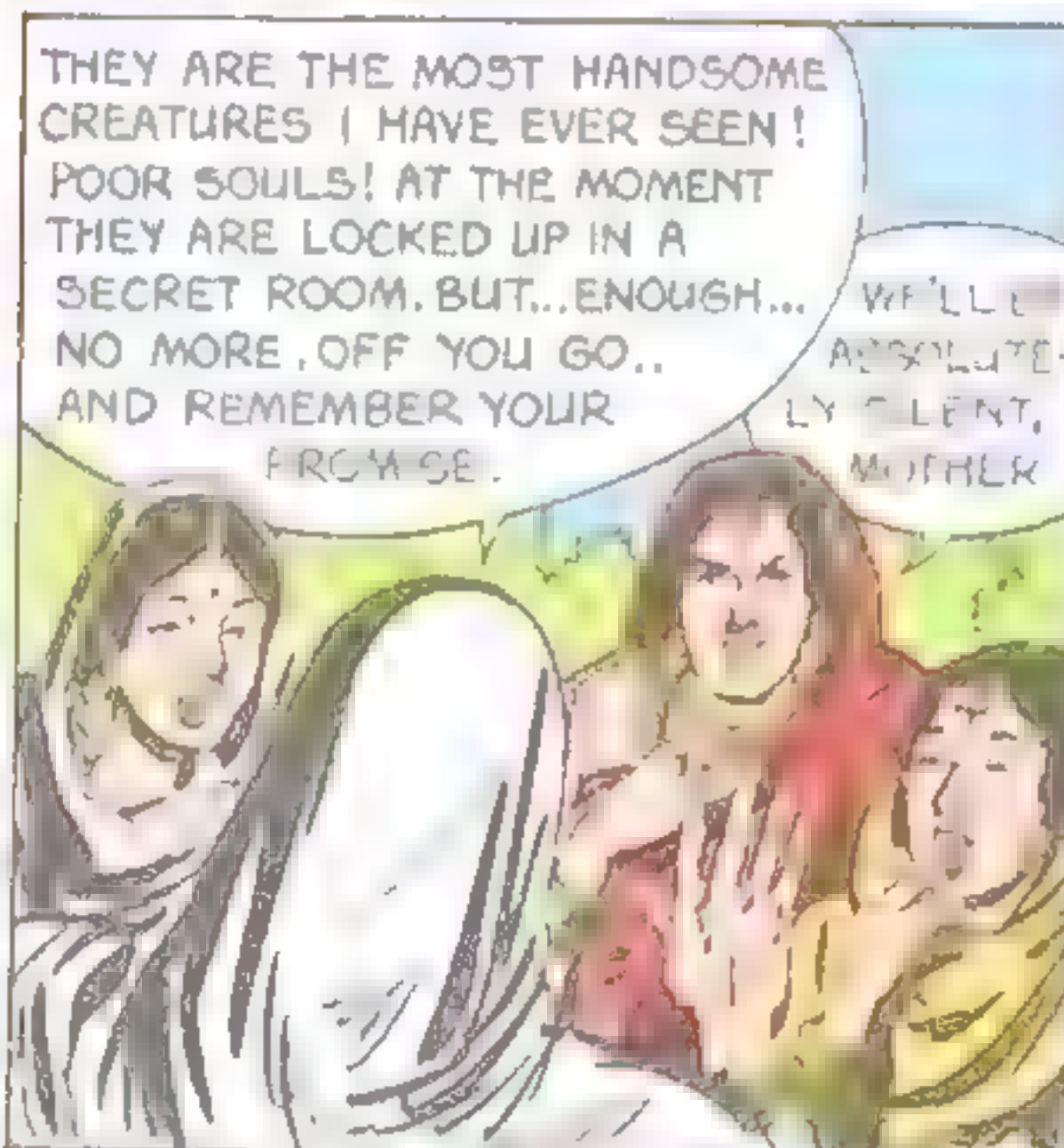


HOW SHALL  
I FIND THEM  
IN THIS VAST  
PLACE?











THEN HE REGAINED HIS NORMAL FORM.



WAKE UP, MY LORDS! I HAVE COME TO RESCUE YOU!

RAMA AND LAKSHMANA GOT UP WITH A START.



WHERE ARE WE?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

YOU ARE IN THE NETHER WORLD, THE PRISONERS OF MAHIRAVANA. HE BROUGHT YOU HERE USING HIS MAGICAL POWERS.

HOW CAN WE FIGHT THESE RAKSHASAS? I DON'T EVEN HAVE MY WEAPONS WITH ME.



I'LL FIGHT THE RAKSHASAS, O RAMA. LET ME, YOUR EVER FAITHFUL SERVANT, DESTROY THIS MAGICIAN ONCE AND FOR ALL.

HANUMAN THEN TOLD THEM OF MAHIRAVANA'S PLANS TO SACRIFICE THEM TO DURGA.



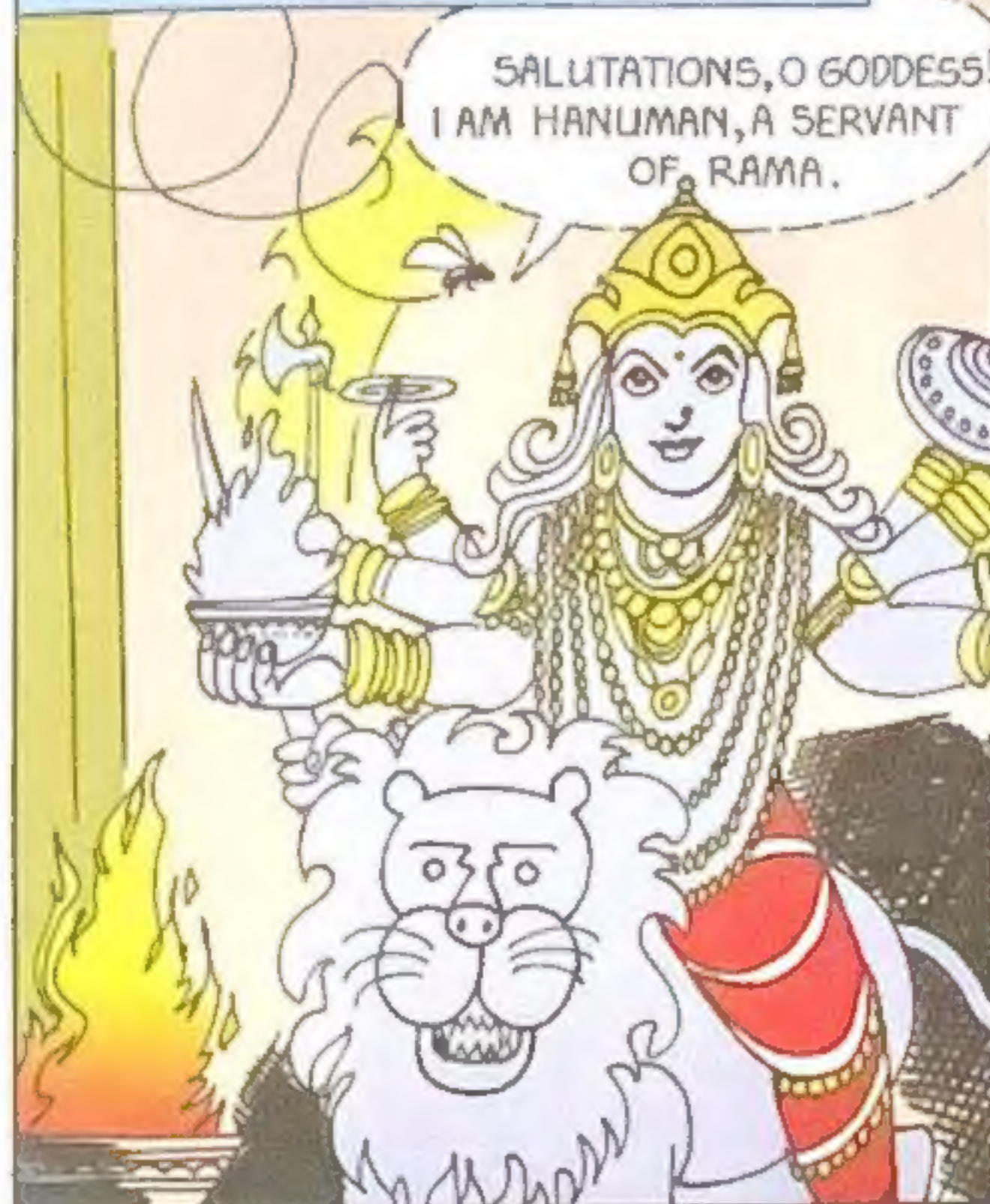
LISTEN, O RAMA. ON MY WAY HERE, I SAW GODDESS DURGA. I'LL GO AND ASK HER FOR HELP.

ALL I NEED NOW IS YOUR BLESSING, MY LORD!



YOU ARE A TRUE FRIEND, HANUMAN. MAY YOU BE SUCCESSFUL.

ONCE AGAIN ASSUMING THE FORM OF A FLY, HANUMAN FLEW TO THE GODDESS.



SALUTATIONS, O GODDESS! I AM HANUMAN, A SERVANT OF RAMA.

THE EVIL MAHIRAVANA INTENDS TO SACRIFICE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA TO YOU. TELL ME, HAS THIS BEEN ORDERED BY YOU?



NO, NO! I HAVE NOT ORDERED ANY SACRIFICE!

BUT MAHIRAVANA WORSHIPS YOU. WILL YOU HELP HIM? FOR IF YOU DO....



DON'T BE IMPATIENT, HANUMAN. LISTEN TO ME FIRST.

MAHIRAVANA WANTS TO GET RID OF HIS ENEMIES. THAT IS WHY HE IS SACRIFICING THEM. HE IS NOT DOING IT TO PLEASE ME.



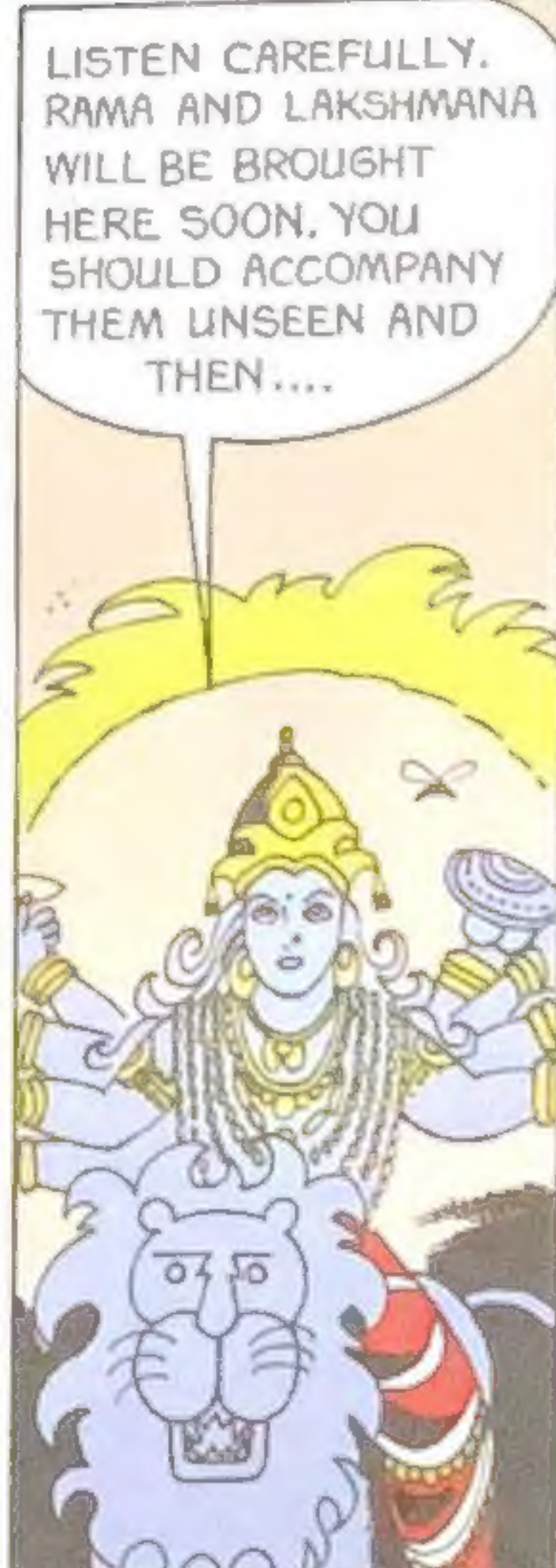
SO YOU WON'T HELP HIM?





NO! I WON'T HELP HIM! MAHIRAVANA HAS STARTED PERSECUTING THE NOBLE AND THE INNOCENT. HIS END IS NEAR.

GOOD! THEN TELL ME HOW TO DESTROY HIM.



LISTEN CAREFULLY. RAMA AND LAKSHMANA WILL BE BROUGHT HERE SOON. YOU SHOULD ACCOMPANY THEM UNSEEN AND THEN....



WHEN THE GODDESS HAD FINISHED TELLING HANUMAN THE COURSE TO TAKE—

THANK YOU, O GODDESS! YOU HAVE SOLVED ALL MY PROBLEMS.



HANUMAN THEN RETURNED TO RAMA AND ASSUMED HIS OWN FORM.

THE GODDESS WAS VERY HELPFUL, MY LORD. SHE HAS SUGGESTED A CLEVER PLAN.

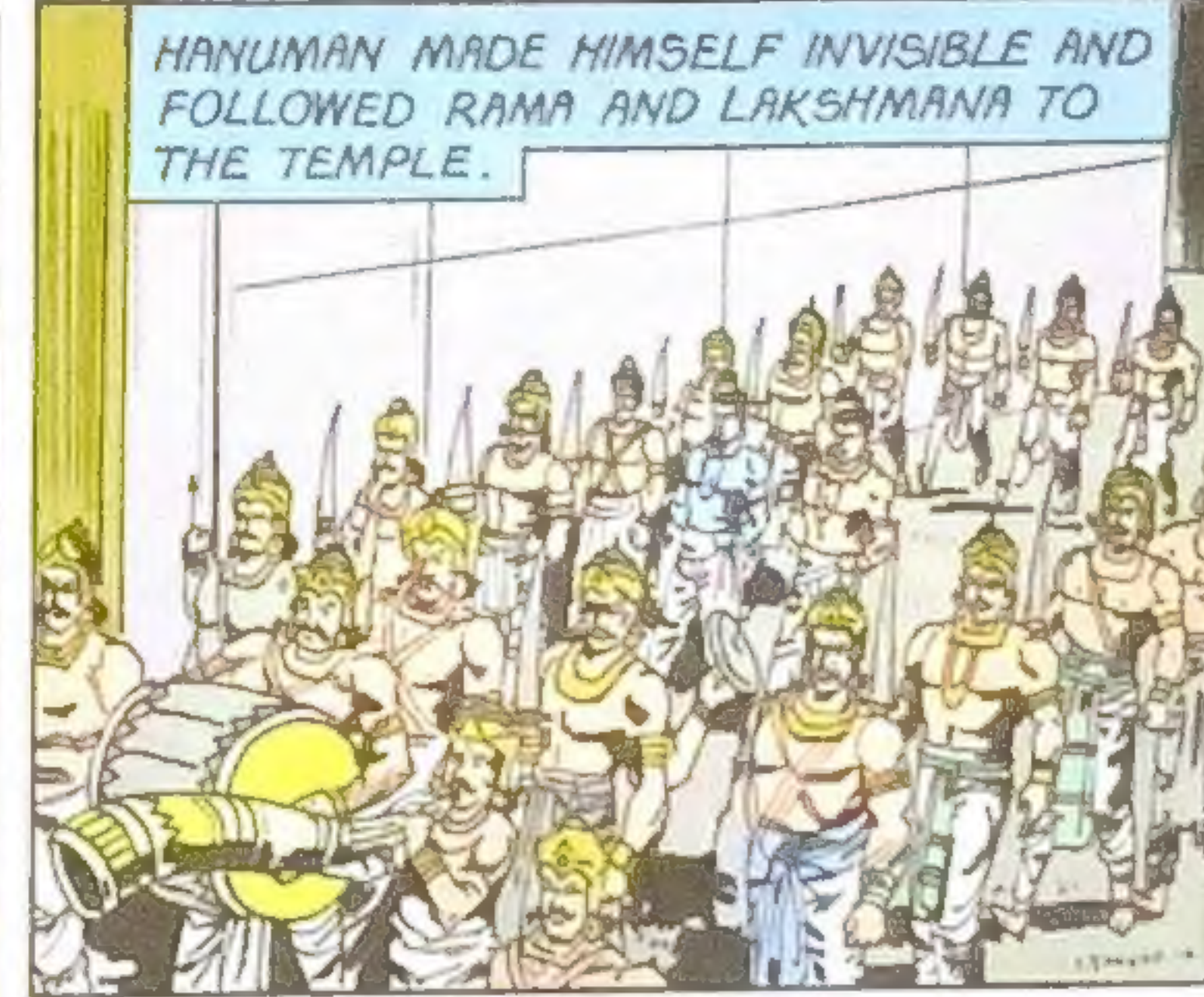
GOOD. TELL ME THE PLAN QUICKLY FOR THERE IS VERY LITTLE TIME LEFT.

HANUMAN TOLD RAMA WHAT WAS TO BE DONE.

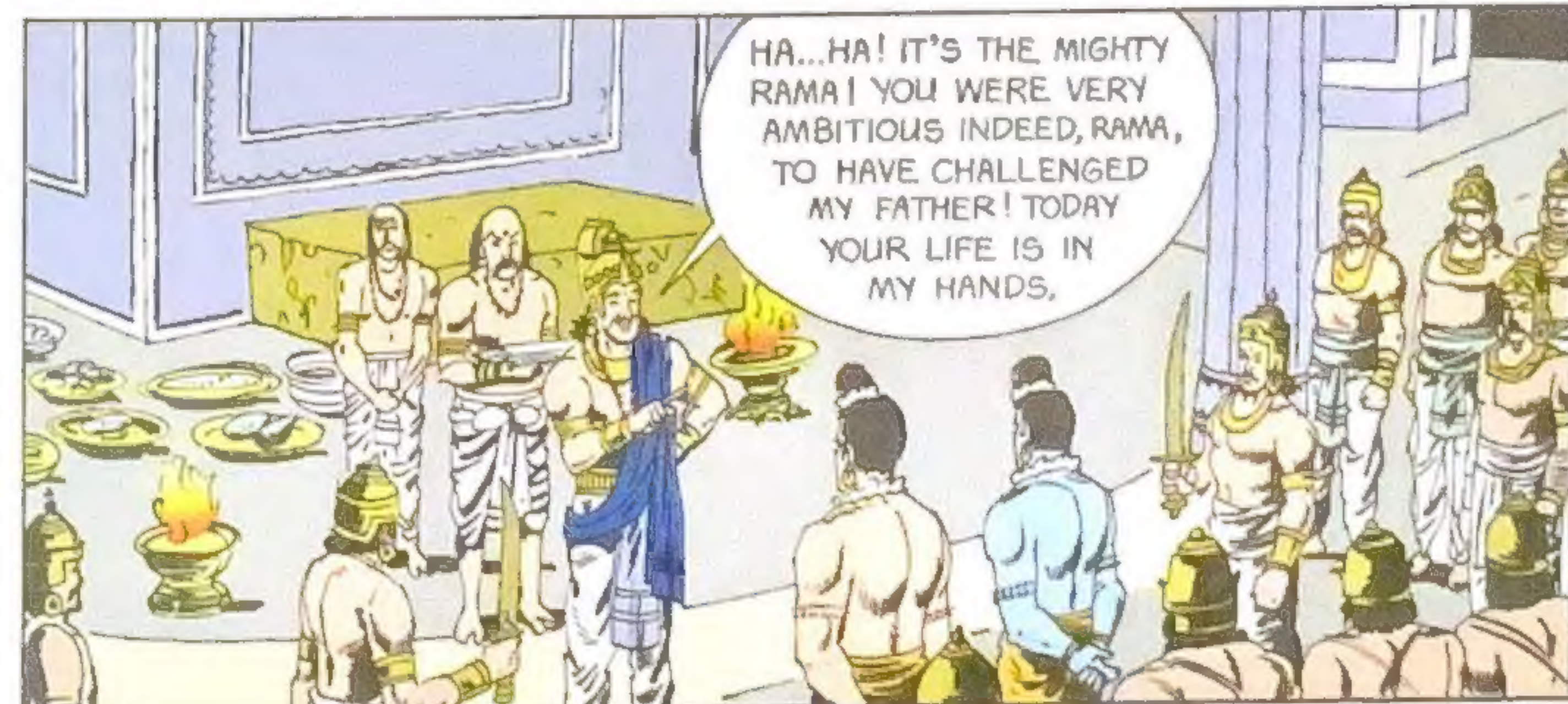


SOON—

BRING THE PRISONERS OUT.



HANUMAN MADE HIMSELF INVISIBLE AND FOLLOWED RAMA AND LAKSHMANA TO THE TEMPLE.



HA...HA! IT'S THE MIGHTY RAMA! YOU WERE VERY AMBITIOUS INDEED, RAMA, TO HAVE CHALLENGED MY FATHER! TODAY YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS.



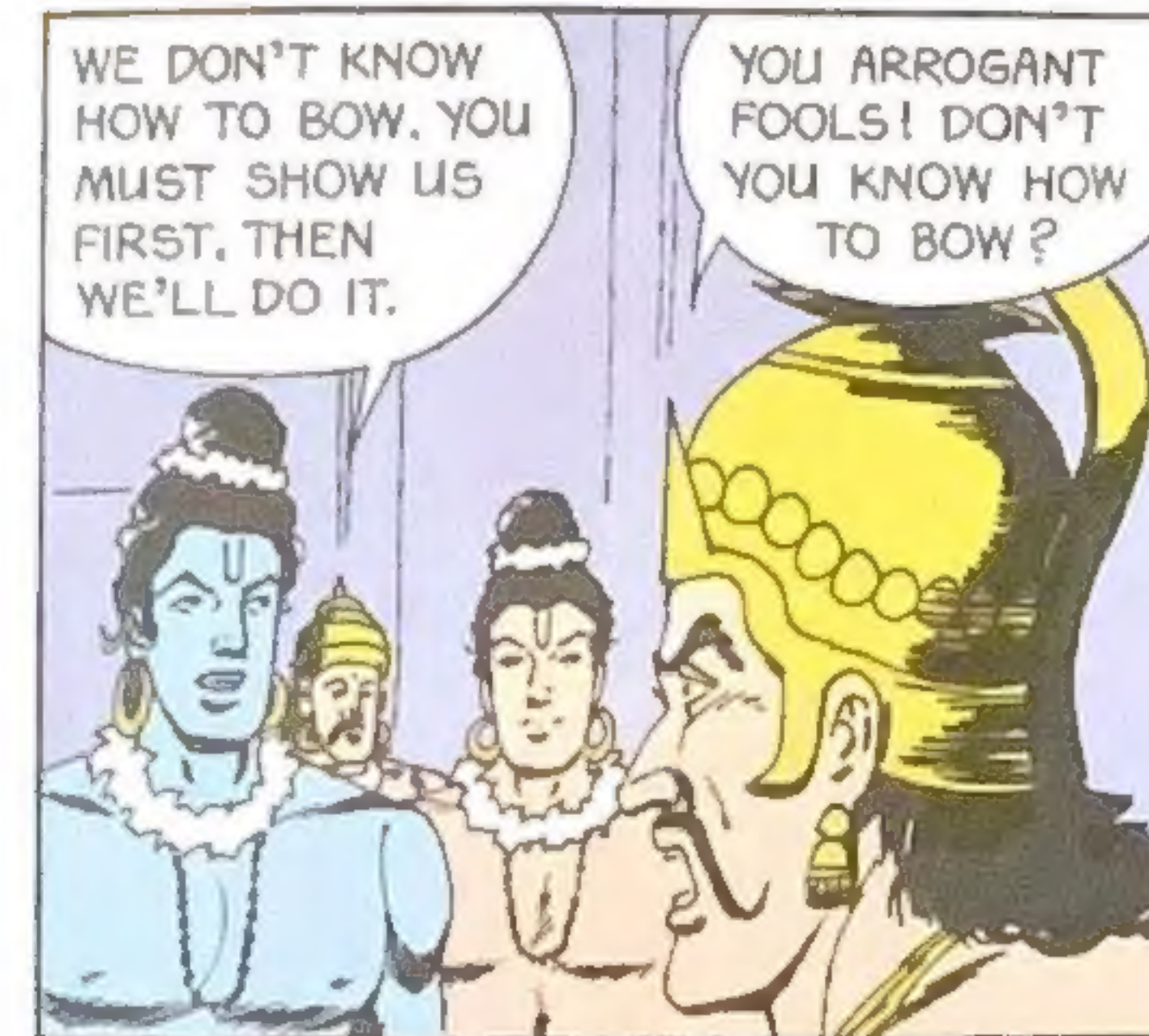
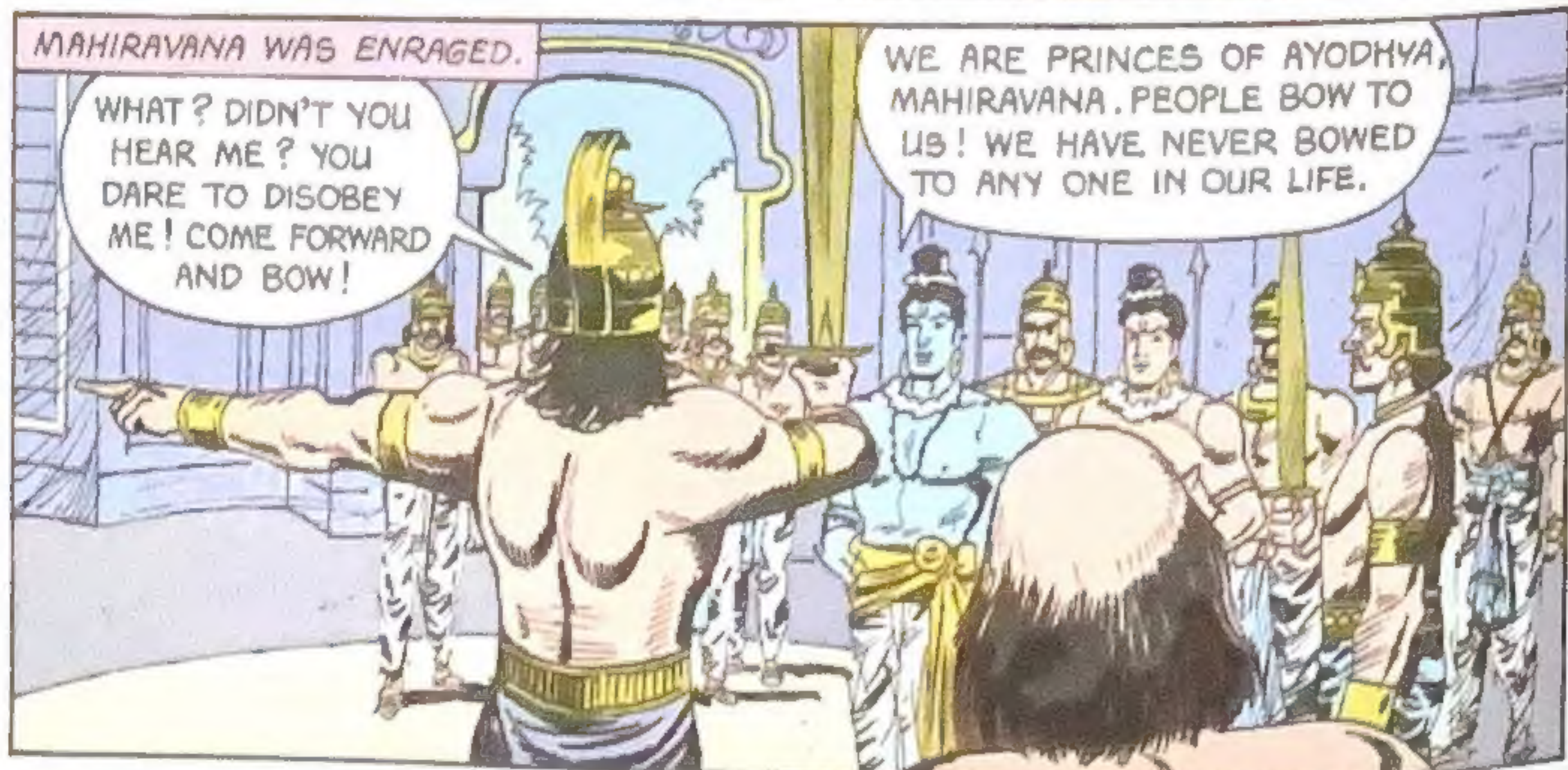
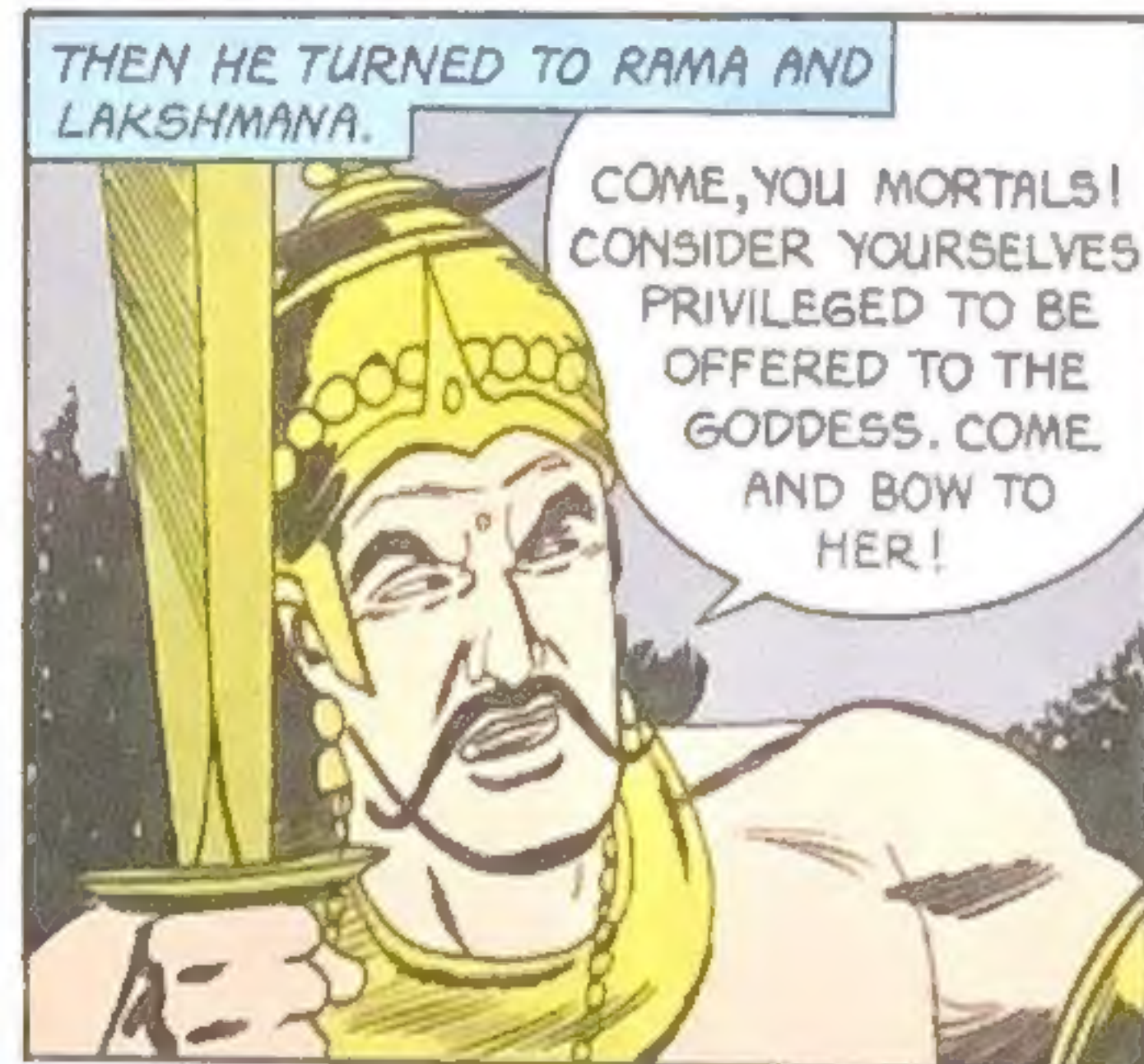
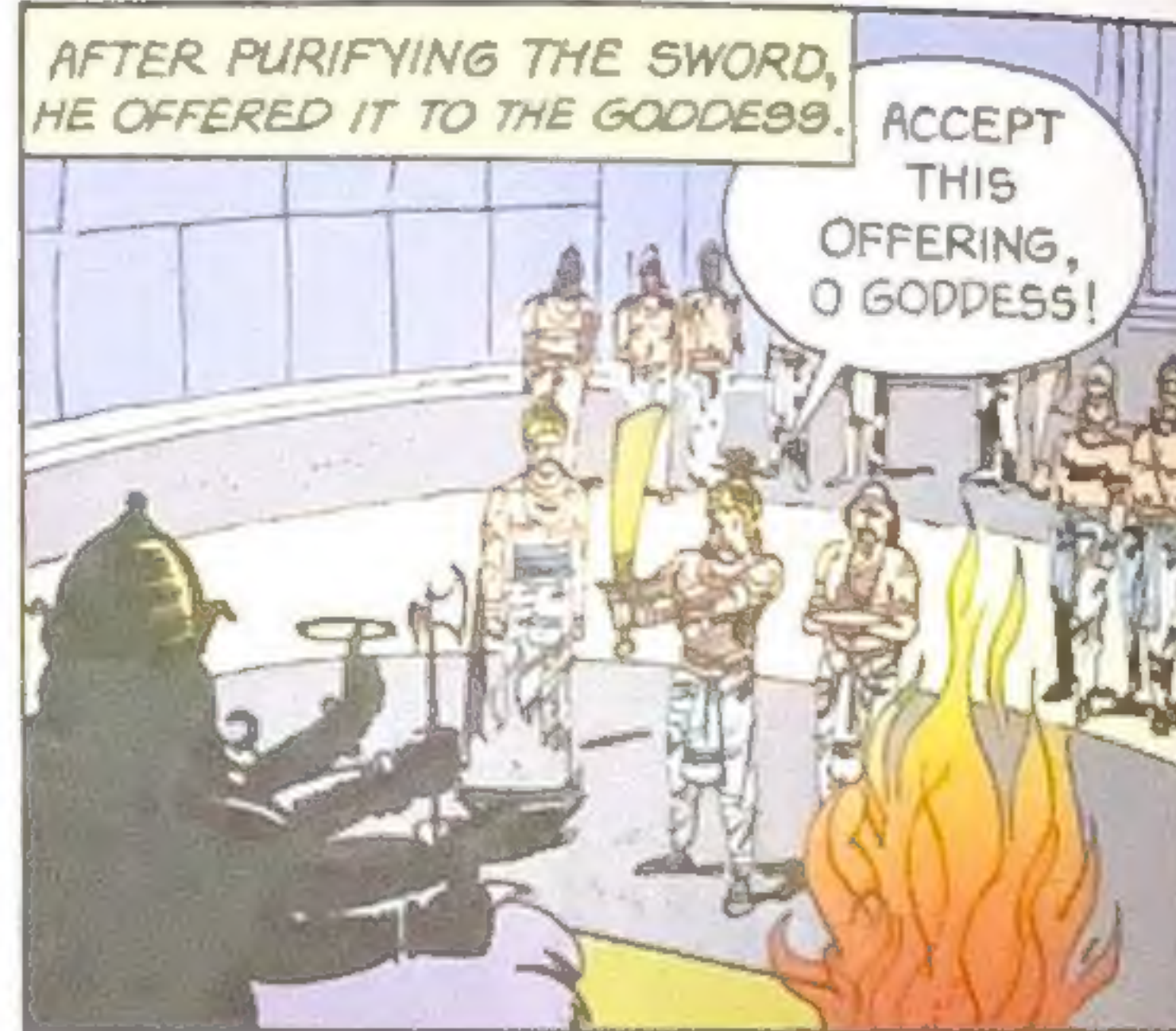
SOON YOU'LL DIE AND MY FATHER WILL MARRY SITA.



THE RITUAL BEGAN—

ALMIGHTY GODDESS! I BOW TO YOU!







WITH TWO MORE BLOWS, HANUMAN SMASHED THE CHAINS THAT BOUND RAMA AND LAKSHMANA.



THEN HE TURNED TO DEAL WITH THE DEMONS—

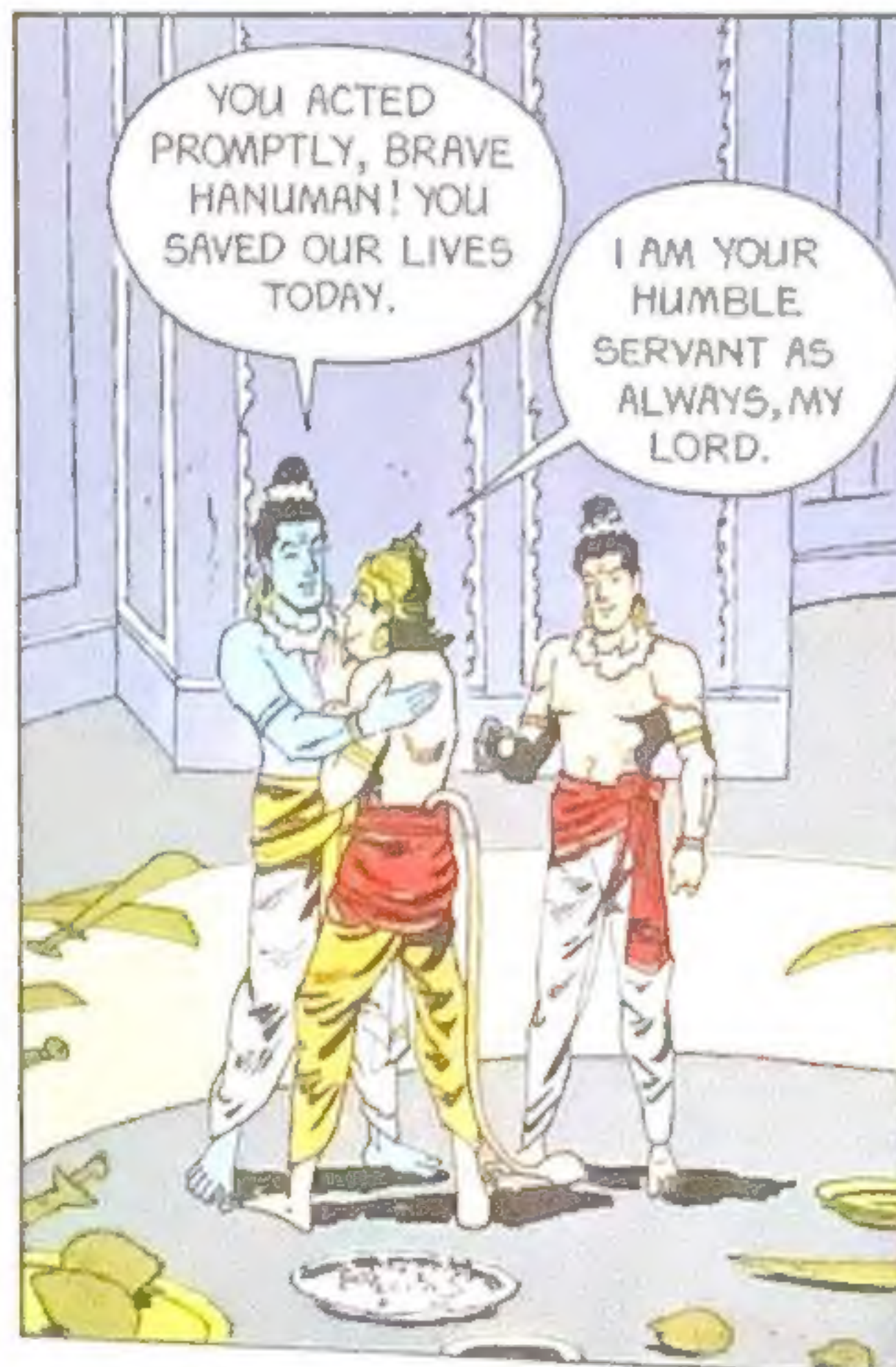


COME FORWARD IF YOU WISH TO CHALLENGE ME. DO YOU DARE?

RUN!

WITHOUT MAHIRAVANA WE ARE LOST!

SOON THEY STARTED ON THEIR JOURNEY BACK.



YOU ACTED PROMPTLY, BRAVE HANUMAN! YOU SAVED OUR LIVES TODAY.

I AM YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT AS ALWAYS, MY LORD.

MEANWHILE IN SUGREEVA'S CAMP—



IT IS PAST NOON AND THEY HAVE NOT YET RETURNED. WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO THEM?

I'M SURE HANUMAN WILL NOT FAIL. LET'S TRY TO REMAIN CALM.

JUST THEN—



LOOK, KING SUGREEVA! THEY'VE COME!



MAHIRAVANA IS DEAD, FRIENDS.

AND RAVANA HAS NO ONE LEFT TO FIGHT FOR HIM!



HE'LL HAVE TO COME TO THE BATTLEFIELD HIMSELF TO FIGHT AND THEN...

...VICTORY WILL BE OURS!

VICTORY TO RAMA!